

american libraries

January/February 2024

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

2023 Year
in Review

p. 24

Preserving
Oral Histories

p. 36

PLUS: Ali Hazelwood,
Referenda Roundup,
Mastering Mocktails



LibLearnX

PREVIEW

p. 42

+Baltimore
Dining Guide
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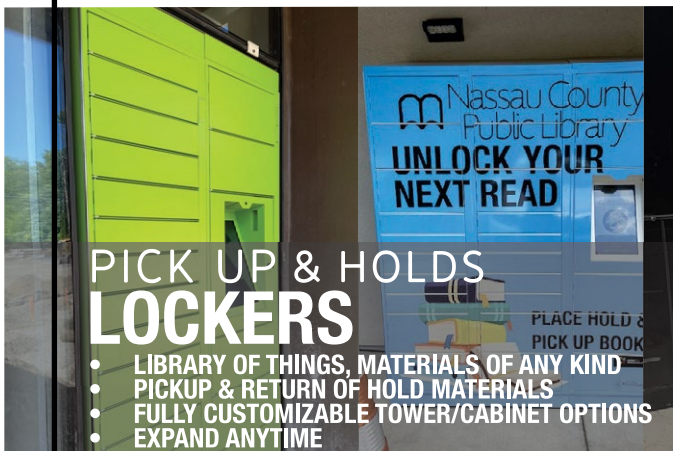
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from the
EDITOR

What Ties Us Together



Sanhita SinhaRoy

LibLearnX kicks off in Baltimore this January. Check out our conference preview (cover story, p. 42) and delight in the dining guide (p. 50), where travel writer—and Baltimore native—Meredith Pratt shows us that Charm City’s culinary traditions extend well beyond seafood.

The last time ALA hosted an Association-wide conference in Baltimore was in 1892, the same year Ellis Island opened as an immigration station in New York Harbor. Henry Ford was on the cusp of building his first gasoline engine, and the Wright brothers were still a decade away from taking flight on the first airplane. Which means railways ruled. In “Keeping Track” (Bookend, p. 64), Associate Editor Megan Bennett talks with Anna Kresmer, archivist of Baltimore’s B&O Railroad Museum, about the transformative power of train travel. “The railroad changed our concept and understanding of distance,” Kresmer says, “and what constituted a country.”

Also tying together a nation are its oral histories. Emily Udell talks with several institutions that are revisiting their collections with cultural sensitivity and equity in mind (“In Their Own Words,” p. 36). Among other things, these libraries have been collecting narratives from marginalized groups and righting historical wrongs.

You’ll notice a new look to our annual Referenda Roundup feature (p. 28). This year we home in on six libraries’ stories, speaking with staff members and advocates about how they prepared for local elections. As Ryan Ireland reports, in this era of book bans, these elections demonstrate that “politically driven opponents continue to threaten the library’s existence, especially in smaller, rural areas”—and that libraries everywhere must be heavily prepared to meet the challenge.

As we ring in 2024, millions will celebrate with a *mocktail*—alcohol-free drinks that have gained in popularity. Many libraries have noted the trend, responding with sober-curious programming. Cass Balzer explains in “Spirit-Free Spaces” (p. 14).

However you celebrate, cheers to a happy new year.

Sanhita

Gathering in Baltimore offers an opportunity to remember the many ways libraries bring communities—and our nation—together.

Stories That Resonate

Let's continue sharing the successes of our libraries



Emily Drabinski

On one of the first cold days this past November, I spent an afternoon with Laura Silver, the librarian at P.S. 90, a diverse Title I public school in the Coney Island neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. (There's a sweet spot in a stairwell where you can see a perfectly framed view of the Wonder Wheel Ferris wheel set against the Atlantic Ocean.)

Silver made us each a cup of tea as we talked through the challenges and joys of her job. She had taught a class that morning using the book *Drum Dream Girl*—for which illustrator Rafael López won a Pura Belpré Award—that sparked the imaginations of her 3rd graders. When she asked what the main character loved, one student said the moon. “The text never references the moon,” Silver told me. “But if you look through the pictures, you’ll see the moon everywhere.”

I appreciate this reminder to look beyond the parts of the story that are easiest to read. We find ourselves confronting a loud and angry narrative about libraries, library workers, and, yes, our library association, that runs counter to reality.

Many local officials have been pressuring libraries for the right to review collection development decisions, as if collections aren't developed by skilled professionals. (If you've ever tried to cut your own hair or plumb your own house, you know the value of people who know what they're doing!) Legislators have proposed laws prohibiting sexually explicit materials in school libraries, a solution for a problem that profoundly does not exist. As library staffers work tirelessly to put books in the hands of young people, angry crowds show up at school and public library board meetings to accuse them of abhorrent crimes. These angry and bombastic tales have dominated coverage of our sector for the past few years.

But as all of us know, this is not the whole story of American libraries. At the New Mexico Library Association conference in Albuquerque

this fall, I heard so many others. A library in Fort Sumner (population 880) provides food assistance to 50 local older adults. In Hatch (population 1,550), the library helps residents file unemployment claims, and it supports small businesses with services. In Tularosa (population 2,640), the public library partners with University of New Mexico to increase the number of water operators so residents can have potable water.

When book banners came to the public library in the city of Rio Rancho, director Jason Shoup drew on the resources of ALA's Freedom to Read Foundation and Office for Intellectual Freedom to turn back the attempt. He also engaged in the core library practice of the reference interview: He talked with a concerned patron about what she saw missing from the collection, added materials that met her information needs, and produced another library supporter in the process.

Everywhere I go, I see library workers pinpointing problems and striving to fix them, identifying gaps in services and filling them.

I recently took a video tour of a community library in Delhi, India, with Zoya Chadha, Mridula Koshy, and Purnima Rao of the country's Free Libraries Network, an online collective of more than a hundred library activists. The library has a rich children's collection, expansive programming, and is open to everyone, regardless of caste. The group is clear in its mission, articulating the library as a site of organizing for justice well beyond its walls. Rao told me they admire ALA's robust support for intellectual freedom, equity and inclusion, and firm commitment to libraries as spaces where everyone can flourish. Seven thousand miles from my home in Brooklyn, this is the story that resonates. As ALA president, it's the one I'm telling as loud as I can. **AL**

EMILY DRABINSKI is associate professor at Queens (N.Y.) College Graduate School of Library and Information Studies.

Everywhere I go, I see library workers pinpointing problems and striving to fix them, identifying gaps in services and filling them.

A Time of Transition

Changes bring opportunities to reflect and move forward on finances



Peter Hepburn

Transition can be unsettling, yes, but it is also an opportunity to step back, take stock, and lay the foundation for what will follow.

It is mid-autumn as I write this column. I've had a spate of trips this fall: visits with family and friends for milestone birthdays; the terrific American Association of School Librarians conference in Tampa, Florida; the ALA Executive Board fall meeting in Chicago; and the endowment trustees meeting in Washington, D.C.

I've shifted from lightweight outfits to the heavier sweaters of the season. Autumn is, after all, a time of transition—which is something our Association is currently experiencing.

Transition can be unsettling, yes, but it is also an opportunity to step back, take stock, and lay the foundation for what will follow. As we work with our interim executive director at the helm and look to the recruitment and eventual arrival of a new executive director, let's consider three key aspects of the Association's finances.

First, there are our successes. Overall, ALA closed FY2023 with significantly higher short-term investments—an indication of liquidity—than in the previous fiscal year, as well as a shrinking loan balance. Contributed revenue (such as donations and grants) was a boon to the Association in the past fiscal year, accounting for almost one-quarter of revenues. Meanwhile, ALA staff members have been vigilant about managing expenses, keeping them below budget in many divisions, round tables, and other units such as Continuing Education. These have been successes worth celebrating, and more importantly, successes for us to build on.

Second, there are the trends we need to keep an eye on. For instance, although the Association continues to draw significant revenue from established sources like conferences, membership, and publishing, some of these units have struggled in recent years to bring a net surplus and provide overhead contributions. Of particular note are the numbers from the 2023 LibLearnX conference in New Orleans,

which lagged expectations. Membership growth, meanwhile, has been slower than expected, and total counts remain below prepandemic levels. Because a large proportion of ALA revenue derives from these sources, the Executive Board will continue to monitor them closely.

Third, there are the areas with potential for change. Managing expenses, an area of success already noted, is sound practice, but we need a stronger push toward generating additional revenue that extends beyond donations and grants. While contributed revenue may have helped bolster our financial stability in recent years, it is difficult to sustain at such levels over time. As a result, we continue to keep an eye on areas that may inform future adjustments. For example, what will LibLearnX in Baltimore tell us about the continued financial viability of that conference? Other strategic priorities include growing our membership and growing our endowment. ALA's Chief Financial Officer Dina Tsourdinis and her team in the finance and accounting office deserve recognition for their collaboration in keeping the Association moving forward.

This transitional period should spur us to think about possibilities for scaffolding the work of ALA with the support that's needed. The Association's financial situation is not precarious, but as a Board we must remain attentive and create an environment that enables new staff leadership to continue building momentum and plan for changing course where necessary.

Transitions allow for the opportunity to reflect and reassess. Let's continue to celebrate the wins and take the steps needed to make the Association as strong as ever. **AL**

PETER HEPBURN is head librarian at College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, California.

✕ This issue of @amlibraries is too good to miss! Deeply moved by Tracy K. Smith, Reginald Dwayne Betts, @rhorton4, and more.

@KARYNCAPLAN, in response to the Nov./Dec. issue

f Walnut Hills in the 'Nati has made a most beautiful transformation. Kudos to the residents of Hamilton County, Ohio, on supporting our libraries with a massive rebuilding levy!

DAVID WHITE, in response to "2023 Library Design Showcase" (Sept./Oct., p. 20)

At a Crossroads

ALA is recruiting a new executive director even as book banning is at record levels. Tracie D. Hall resigned in October, taking with her awards from prestigious groups honoring her dignity, grace, and oratory skills, which cemented ALA as the national voice for free people reading freely. The Association wooed Hall and then did not know how to turn the light she brought to us into a long tenure, even as she converted ALA's fiscal nightmare into a surplus.

Leslie Burger's appointment as interim executive director in November is a positive step. Still, a new approach is required to ensure the retention of a new executive director and a more cordial environment for the Executive Board. Members must be vigilant in monitoring recruitment and retention, then stand ready to organize if a reasonable plan is not implemented. Below are benchmarks ALA should maintain during this process:

Create a transition plan. This plan falls within the duties of the board's Executive Committee (EC). With approval from the board and incoming director, the plan must chart the new hire's first year, with monthly check-in periods to assess progression on Association priorities.

Establish a transition subcommittee. This primary goal of this group—composed of board members appointed by the EC—would



be to prepare ALA leaders and members to be welcoming and supportive, and make certain that resources are available to generate success for the transition.

Develop a strong director-president partnership. This partnership, built on reciprocal trust, begins with regular meetings so the two forge a shared vision for ALA's mission, goals, and objectives. The EC must ensure that the two roles are differentiated and maintained in practice, since this distinction has been a point of contention in years past.

Throughout the transition plan's implementation, justice must prevail if ALA's legacy as an anchor organization in our democracy is to continue.

Betty Turock

1995–1996 ALA president
Highland Park, New Jersey

Roles in Misinformation

The 2021 Amnesty International report referenced in Tracie D. Hall's column ("The Good Fight," Sept./Oct., p. 5) notes oppressive regimes silencing journalists at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The

Amnesty International author fairly cites the dangers of anti-fake news and misinformation legislation that enabled imprisoning dissident journalists in places like the Philippines, Russia, and Tanzania.

The report then mentions social media's role in spreading misinformation. In the same breath, Amnesty International calls on countries to "stop using the pandemic as an excuse to silence independent reporting, debate, and scrutiny" and "lift all undue restrictions on the right to freedom of expression," but then calls on governments and social media companies to do the opposite: to "take measures to address the viral spread of misinformation."

This is exactly what the US government was doing the entire time. In fact, the Biden Administration is being sued by attorneys general in Louisiana and Missouri, who allege in filings that it violated the First Amendment by urging social media companies to remove posts federal officials deemed had misinformation about COVID-19. In October, the Supreme Court agreed to hear a challenge from the administration to a lower court's ruling that it may have violated free speech laws.

Hall ironically invokes "the constitutional bedrocks of individual agency and intellectual freedom." But of what value are those bedrocks if intellectual freedom is valid only for government-approved speech,

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and the wrong kind of individual agency can make healthcare workers lose their jobs for refusing vaccine mandates?

The government censoring constitutionally protected speech was happening right before our eyes, yet where was ALA? They were quietly acquiescing to the deleterious attitudes that, without presenting any proof, this “misinformation” has fatal consequences and governments and social media companies should step in to censor it—entities that aren’t known for always being forthright, transparent, or operating with the utmost probity.

Ross Sempek
Twin Falls, Idaho

Gratitude for Service

Hall reflected a mirror of destination for me (“Executive Director Tracie D. Hall to Depart from ALA,” The Scoop, Oct. 5). I applaud her, her sacrifices, and wish her the absolute best on her next venture. She deserves every blessing coming toward her, as she’s earned it. I’m grateful and indebted to her leadership.

Jean Darnell
Austin, Texas

Grants for School Libraries

The October 4 AL Direct had an article about grant writing for school libraries. I feel compelled to add a wrinkle to this process. For 28 of my 50 years as a librarian, I was a school librarian. Early in this part of my career, I undertook writing grants for the school libraries under my charge.

I was able to secure three grants in the first three years, but I started to notice something about my budget. For

each of those years, the school-supported monies I received the following year decreased. For each grant I won, I permanently lost the school support money by an equal amount.

I talked with the financial officer about this practice, emphasizing that grants were usually a one-time payout and that my budget was actually being cut each time we were awarded a grant. They would not change the practice, nor did the two financial officers that followed. As a result, I quit applying for grants. This is a possible wrinkle of which school librarians should be aware.

Susan Allen
Buffalo, New York

CORRECTIONS

In “A Welcoming Space” (Sept./Oct., p. 4), we erroneously referred to P.S. 28 in New York City as P.S. 128.

In “2023 Library Design Showcase” (Sept./Oct., p. 20), we omitted one of the architecture firms, HBM Architects, that worked on the Kanawha County (W.Va.) Public Library renovation and expansion.

In “Tranquil Tones” (Nov./Dec., p. 12), we misspelled the names of singer Pagnia Xiong and her sister, reiki specialist Nancy Xiong.

In “CALA Turns 50” (Nov./Dec., p. 24), we misidentified the Illinois city where Dominican University is located. The school is in River Forest.

In “One of a Kind” (Nov./Dec., p. 26), we misidentified the funding source mentioned in the “Keeping a Community Healthy” section. It is the Network of the National Library of Medicine.

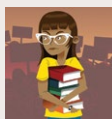
What You’re Reading

1 One of a Kind Five solo staffers from public, school, and community college libraries share their stories. bit.ly/AL-Solo

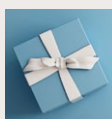
2 Lighting the Way Prison reform advocates discuss efforts to ensure library access for incarcerated people. bit.ly/AL-Lighting

3 Tranquil Tones Sound meditation programs at libraries provide mindfulness and stress relief. bit.ly/AL-Tranquil

In Case You Missed It



How We Fight Back Library workers and advocates are turning to new policies, lawsuits, and legislation to combat book bans. bit.ly/AL-FightBack



Holiday Gift Guide for Librarians and Book Lovers Fifteen selections under \$50 make great presents any time. bit.ly/AL-Gifts23



Recipe in Peace Meet the librarian who finds and tries recipes on grave-stones, and documents her culinary process on social media. bit.ly/AL-Recipe

2024 I Love My Librarian Winners Meet this year’s honorees. bit.ly/AL-ILML24

Coming Soon

Coverage of **2024’s LibLearnX**, to be held January 19–22 in Baltimore.

Get to know Baltimore in the January episode of **Call Number with American Libraries**.

Helmick, Pun Seek 2025–2026 ALA Presidency

The two candidates for the 2025–2026 presidency of the American Library Association (ALA) are Sam Helmick, community and access services coordinator at Iowa City (Iowa) Public Library, and Raymond Pun, academic and research librarian at Alder Graduate School of Education in Redwood City, California.

Helmick is currently a member of the ALA Executive Board and president of the Iowa Library Association. They previously served as chair-elect of the Freedom to Read Foundation and chair of the Iowa Governor's Commission of Libraries. They have served on committees for the Network of the National Library of Medicine and the Stonewall Book Awards. Helmick also previously served on ALA's Policy Monitoring Committee; Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Michael L. Printz Committee; the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) Sophie Brody Medal Committee; and the YALSA Fundraising Task Force.



Sam Helmick

Helmick holds an MLIS from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a bachelor's in human services from Iowa Wesleyan University in Mount Pleasant.

"Libraries are cornerstones of knowledge, equity, and community," Helmick said in a November 9 statement. "As a lifelong exponent of literacy and a staunch believer in the transformative power of our work, it is an honor to run for the presidency of [ALA] and to leverage this opportunity to connect, celebrate, and advocate libraries."

Helmick continued: "Together, let's chart a course for an ALA that champions innovation, embraces diversity, and ensures that libraries remain vibrant hubs of inspiration and inclusivity. Join me in shaping a future where every voice is heard, every story is celebrated, and every library is a beacon of enlightenment. Together, we will write the next chapter of [ALA's] legacy."

Pun currently serves as the immediate past president of the Chinese American Librarians Association and as a member of the California Library Association's Advocacy and

Legislation Committee. He is also former president of the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association.

Pun has previously served on ALA Council, ALA Policy Corps, and as a member of the advisory committees for two ALA past presidents. He is a member of the American Association of School Librarians; Association for Library Service to Children; Association of College and Research Libraries; Library Freedom Project; American Indian Library Association; Black Caucus of the American Library Association;



Raymond Pun

Association of Jewish Libraries; Association for Rural and Small Libraries; Reforma, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking; and ALA's International Relations Round Table and Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table.

Pun holds a PhD in educational leadership from California State University, Fresno; an MLS from Queens (N.Y.) College; and a master's in East Asian Studies and a bachelor's in history from St. John's University in New York.

"For almost 150 years, ALA has been recognized as the world's first and largest library association, but ALA has not been without its flaws, including its exclusionary history, particularly regarding underrepresented groups," Pun said in a November 9 statement. "I believe inclusive leadership centers on compassion and collaboration, and with these guiding values, I strive to champion ALA as an evolving model of organizational excellence in advocacy efforts and global engagement and lead ALA in collective response to these issues in our profession and beyond."

Helmick and Pun, along with any petition candidates, will take part in a virtual candidates' forum at 2 p.m. Central on February 8. Each candidate will have the opportunity to share a statement and answer questions from members. Register to attend at bit.ly/ALA-PCForum0224.

Ballot mailing for the election will begin March 11 and continue through April 3. Members must be in good standing to vote.

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALAElections. ●

Generation Z and Millennials Lead Library Use

Generation Z and millennials are using public libraries—both in person and digitally—at higher rates than older generations, according to an ALA report released November 1.

Gen Z and Millennials: How They Use Public Libraries and Identify through Media Use surveyed 2,075 members of these generations in 2022 and found that 54% visited a library in the previous 12 months. More than half who reported visiting a physical library said that they also borrow from a library's digital collection. The report also found that of the 43% of respondents who don't consider themselves readers, more than half visited their local library in the prior year.

The report also found that:

- Respondents prefer physical books.
- Gen Z and millennials view the library as a place to sample materials, informing their purchases and paid subscriptions of information and media.
- Respondents who identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color are more likely to experience longer wait times for digital materials.

“These digitally immersed generations make clear that libraries are about more than books,” said ALA President Emily Drabinski in a November 1 statement. “Programming relevant to teens and their parents—coding clubs, job application help, gaming—draws even nonreaders to the library, as does the physical space to connect and collaborate.”

For more information, including additional key findings in the report, visit bit.ly/GenZ-MillReport. ●

RUSA Seeking Nominations for Achievement Awards

RUSA is now accepting nominations for its Achievement Awards. These awards highlight exceptional services provided by libraries and librarians in several categories.

Each award has its own eligibility criteria and prize amount. The deadline to submit nominations is February 23. For more information, including the full list of categories and how to apply, visit bit.ly/RUSA-AA24.

Applications Open for SRRT Conference Travel Grant

ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) is accepting applications for its

Conference Travel Grant, which will help finance up to two SRRT members' attendance to the 2024 Annual Conference and Exhibition in San Diego. Each grant provides \$1,000 to help defray airfare, lodging, and conference registration costs.

The deadline to apply is January 15. The recipients will be chosen by the SRRT Conference Travel Grants Selection Committee. All applicants will be notified of the committee's decision by March 1. For more information, visit bit.ly/SRRT-AC24.

ALA Student Scholarships Available

More than \$300,000 in ALA scholarships are available to students earning their

CALENDAR

JAN. 19–22

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MAR. 16

Freedom of Information Day
bit.ly/FOI-Day

APR.

School Library Month
ala.org/aasl/advocacy/slm

APR. 3–5

PLA 2024 Conference
Columbus, Ohio
placonference.org

APR. 7–13

National Library Week
bit.ly/ALA-NLW

APR. 9

National Library Workers Day
ala-apa.org/nlwd

APR. 10

National Library Outreach Day
bit.ly/ALA-NLOD

APR. 28–MAY 4

Preservation Week
preservationweek.org

APR. 30

Día: Children's Day/Book Day
dia.ala.org

JUNE

Rainbow Book Month
bit.ly/RBMonth

JUNE 25–28

Rare Books and Manuscripts Section 2024 Conference
Costa Mesa, California
bit.ly/RBMS2024

JUNE 27–JULY 2

2024 Annual Conference
San Diego
alaannual.org

SEPT.

Library Card Sign-Up Month
bit.ly/LibCardSU

OCT.

Teentober
ala.org/yalsa/teentober

OCT. 20–26

National Friends of Libraries Week
bit.ly/ALA-NFLW

ALA Councilor-at-Large Candidates Announced

ALA's Nominating Committee has selected the following 18 candidates to run for 12 at-large seats on ALA Council for the 2024-2027 term.

Caroline Akervik
Library Media Coordinator
Eau Claire (Wis.) Area
School District

Ana Elisa de Campos Salles
District Manager
San Francisco Public Library

Jim DelRosso
Assistant Director,
Catherwood Library
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

Michele Fenton
Librarian I and Cataloger
Indiana State Library
Indianapolis

Cathi Fuhrman
Librarian
State College (Pa.)
Area High School

Travis Givens
Head of Access Services,
A. C. Buehler Library
Elmhurst (Ill.) University

Lucia Gonzalez
Director
In Other Words
Hialeah, Florida

Sonnet Ireland
Director
Washington Parish Library
Franklinton, Louisiana

Bradley Kuykendall
Floating Branch Manager
Dayton (Ohio)
Metro Library

Anne Larrivee
Collection Strategist and
Anthropology and
Sociology Librarian
West Chester (Pa.)
University Libraries

Andrea Legg
Director
North Canton (Ohio)
Public Library

Katherine Lester
Adjunct Faculty,
School of Information
Sciences
Wayne State University
Detroit

Mike Marlin
Director, Braille and
Talking Book Library
California State Library
Sacramento

Stacey Nunn
Library Media Specialist
New Town Elementary
School, Baltimore
County Public Schools
Owings Mills, Maryland

Michelle Osborne
Stanley Branch Manager
Gaston County (N.C.)
Public Library

Brian E. C. Schottlaender
Principal
re:work library consulting
San Diego

Natalie Starosta
Director
North Riverside (Ill.)
Public Library

Kestrel Ward
Library Associate I, George
A. Smathers Libraries
University of Florida
Gainesville •

2024 Election Dates

Ballot mailing for the 2024 ALA election begins on March 11. The election closes April 3. Renew your membership by January 31 to ensure that you receive your ballot for the 2024 ALA election. •



master's degree in library science or school library media programs.

Scholarships range from \$2,500 to \$8,000 per student per year. Scholarships are available for children's librarianship, public librarianship, youth librarianship, federal librarianship, new media, and library automation. Additionally, scholarships are available for minorities, individuals with disabilities, and people who currently work in libraries and are seeking their master's degrees in library and information science.

The deadline to apply is March 1. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in a program that has been accredited

by ALA. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-Sch24.

Nominations Open for SustainRT Wellness Citation

Nominations are open for the ALA Sustainability Round Table's (SustainRT) Citation for Wellness in the Workplace. The award recognizes libraries that make an extra effort to meet the wellness needs of their staff members by providing opportunities for continuing education, fostering a positive work environment, ensuring pay equity, and more.

SustainRT will honor the winner during ALA's 2024 Annual Conference and Exhibition.

All ALA members are eligible to nominate a library. The deadline to submit nominations is March 15.

For more information, visit bit.ly/SustainRT-WA.

Register for the 2024 PLA Conference

Registration is now open for the Public Library Association (PLA) 2024 Conference, to be held April 3-5 in Columbus, Ohio.

The conference will offer more than 100 education sessions, as well as speakers and authors, networking opportunities, career services, and an exhibit hall showcasing the latest in library products

and services. Featured speakers include author and journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates, writer Mary Annaïse Heglar, and author and comedian Dulcé Sloan.

Members of PLA and the Ohio Library Council have access to an early bird discount through January 12. Then, advance registration will open to all attendees and run through February 23. For more information, visit bit.ly/PLA24-Reg.

2024 Carnegie Medals Shortlist Unveiled

On November 14, ALA announced the six books shortlisted for the Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction. The awards recognize the previous year's best fiction and nonfiction books written for adult readers and published in the US.

The 2023 shortlist titles in fiction are *The Berry Pickers* by Amanda Peters (Catapult); *Denison Avenue*, written by

Christina Wong and illustrated by Daniel Innes (ECW Press); and *Let Us Descend* by Jesmyn Ward (Scribner).

The 2023 shortlist titles in nonfiction are *The Great Displacement: Climate Change and the Next American Migration* by Jake Bittle (Simon & Schuster); *The Talk* by Darrin Bell (Henry Holt and Company); and *We Were Once a Family: A Story of Love, Death, and Child Removal in America* by Roxanna Asgarian (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux).

Winners will be announced January 20 at the 2024 LibLearnX conference in Baltimore. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-CS24.

ALA President named to 2023 Out100 List

ALA President Emily Drabinski was named to *Out* magazine's 2023 Out100 list, which honors LGBTQIA+ individuals for their outstanding contributions,

impact, and influence each year. *Out* published the list in its November/December issue.

The theme for 2023's list was "Open Doors," highlighting those who have eliminated barriers for others. Drabinski is featured in the Storytellers category. For more information, visit bit.ly/EDOut23.

Reforma and GNCRT to Curate Comics Reading List

On October 12, Reforma and the Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (GNCRT) announced their forthcoming Collaboration Core Comics Reading List. The new, joint project will feature graphic novels for all ages that showcase Spanish-speaking characters and Latinx stories and creators. Webinars and additional lists pertaining to this work will also be highlighted throughout the year.



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UPDATE

A joint committee of 14 members from each group will compile the annotated list. The committee began evaluating graphic novels on September 1. Nominations are open to librarians, educators, comic enthusiasts, and others.

The list will be announced in June, coinciding with ALA's 2024 Annual Conference. For more information, visit bit.ly/REFGNC-Comix.

NYPL, ALA Release Anti-Book Bans Toolkit

On October 12, New York Public Library (NYPL) and ALA released a digital toolkit in support of their joint Books for All anticensorship campaign. The toolkit includes guides on how to fight book bans, book discussion prompts, marketing materials, and more.

NYPL and ALA launched Books for All during Banned Books Week 2023. Since many of the books being banned and challenged across the US are for young people, the campaign's primary audience is teen readers and includes a new banned book club for teens. The campaign will continue through the 2023–2024 school year and end in June.

The toolkit is available to all for free. To download this resource, and for more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-B4A.

ALA Honored with Bush National Literacy Honors Award

ALA received the 2023 Barbara Bush National Literacy Honors Award at the National Celebration of Reading, held on October 11 in Washington, D.C. The award honored ALA's commitment to improving, expanding, and advocating for adult literacy.

Hosted by the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, the annual National Celebration of Reading brought together members of the Bush family, bestselling authors, entertainers, and other guests at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The award was accepted by Alan S. Inouye, ALA's interim associate

New Initiative to Address Climate Change

ALA announced on October 25 that it is partnering with the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI) to create the National Climate Action Strategy, a strategic plan that will outline how library workers can address and mitigate issues related to climate change.

The National Climate Action Strategy will provide guidance on how libraries can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help their communities adapt to climate change, and engage in climate justice work. To inform this plan, ALA member leaders with experience focusing on sustainability will convene at the 2024 LibLearnX conference in Baltimore. ALA Council's Committee on Sustainability and SLI will also conduct a virtual session and survey to collect data.

"Sustainability is a core value of librarianship," said ALA President Emily Drabinski in an October 25 statement. "This plan builds on years of work by committed ALA member leaders and will help library workers gain further understanding, confidence, and access to resources to build a more sustainable future for libraries and the communities they serve."

For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-SLI23.

executive director for public policy and advocacy. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-BushA23.

Net Neutrality Advances

During its October 19 meeting, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to advance chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel's proposal to reinstate rules that would protect net neutrality. The FCC will finalize the plan this year.

Net neutrality is the principle that internet service providers should treat all data equally and not discriminate against or prioritize any data regardless of its source, content, or destination. In 2017, the FCC eliminated strong network neutrality rules that preserved an open and fair internet for all users. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-FCCNN.

New Guide for Programming with LC Digital Collections

On September 18, ALA released a new LibGuide to help library workers use Library of Congress (LC) Digital Collections in programming and other educational opportunities.

The guide focuses on eight LC collections: arts, civics, folklife, history, literature, maps, military experience, and STEM. Collection highlights and program ideas can be adapted for various types of libraries and audiences.

ALA received funding from LC's Teaching with Primary Sources Partner Program to develop the guide. For more information, visit bit.ly/LCDigGuide-24.

Advocacy Action Plan Workbook Now Available

ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy Office (PPAO) released a new version of *The Advocacy Action Plan Workbook*. PPAO's Committee on Library Advocacy developed the workbook, which was published on September 18 and is available for free download. It's an update to the original edition that was created in 2009.

The resource is intended to help patrons engage in library advocacy on any issue by guiding them through critical steps such as forming an action plan, assessing community needs, setting goals, and more. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-AdvocWB24. AL

Ready

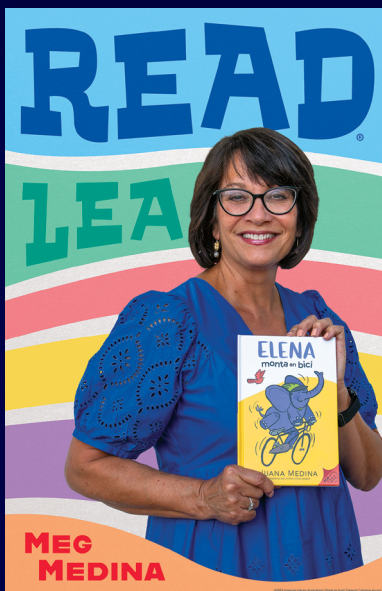
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April 7-13, 2024

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Meg Medina, National Library Week 2024 Honorary Chair

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TRENDS



Adult patrons sample an array of sober cocktails at Grand Forks (N.Dak.) Public Library's Music and Mocktails event in October 2023. The event brought together residents, local businesses, and live musicians.

because of higher stress, more alcohol availability at home, and boredom. But in a 2023 Nielsen survey, 34% of Americans reported trying to cut back on drinking, and 24% responded that they live an alcohol-free lifestyle.

The past few years have led to “a whole way of looking at life,” says Wendt, and library workers have provided support. For those who organize these events, they say that such programming has promoted inclusion, helped those in recovery, and further established the library as a safe place to socialize.

Spirit-Free Spaces

Libraries shake things up with mocktail programs

BY Cass Balzer

Alcohol-free events have gained significant traction in recent years. It's a trend reflected in the growing popularity of wellness challenges like Dry January, a time when millions of people abstain from alcohol at the start of a new year.

In response, several public libraries around the country are now providing adults-only, sober-curios programming to educate attendees on making alcohol-free mixed drinks, often called *mocktails* or *sober cocktails*.

“Coming out of COVID, there were a lot of people [who said],

‘I want to get healthier, I want to feel better,’ and they tried a sober month,” says Wendy Wendt, director of Grand Forks (N. Dak.) Public Library (GFPL), which hosted its second annual Music and Mocktails event in October 2023. “Now [they’re] looking for more opportunities to just do things alcohol-free.”

In a 2020 survey of US adults from the National Library of Medicine, nearly two-thirds of more than 800 participants said their alcohol consumption had increased compared with their consumption rates before the pandemic, mainly

Masterful mocktails

In March 2023, Sewickley (Pa.) Library (SL) worked with local bar Harold's Haunt, which offers alcohol-free drinks on its regular menu, to host a master class in sober mixology.

The bar manager at Harold's Haunt demonstrated how to create four concoctions: the Belenus Chariot, featuring grapefruit and rosemary; hibiscus tea-based Allure of Adonis; Pomona's Harvest, including orange juice and sage; and Baymax, a fizzy mocktail with lime, sage, and orange bitters. The manager shared professional insights on flavor profiles, drink constructions, herbal characteristics, and more.

“This isn't just a Shirley Temple,” says Emily Fear, SL librarian and program organizer. “These are

“This isn’t just a Shirley Temple. These are beautifully crafted, very thoughtful, and delicious drinks.”

EMILY FEAR, librarian at Sewickley (Pa.) Library

beautifully crafted, very thoughtful, and delicious drinks.”

GFPL introduced its Music and Mocktails program in 2022 as part of a broader effort to support more health and wellness initiatives. Spearheaded by Grand Forks Public Friends (GFPF), the program has showcased mocktails created by local organizations and businesses that compete for the title of Master of the Mocktail. Attendees pay \$10 to sample contenders’ creations and vote for their favorite drink while listening to live music from local bands. The event cost \$2,700 to host and was covered by GFPF.

“This event is a blast, both for attendees and us as planners,” Wendt says. “Everybody wins.”

A ‘third place’

At Irvin L. Young Memorial Library (ILYML) in Whitewater, Wisconsin, Programming and Makerspace Librarian Sarah French is creating a spirit-free space for locals. French led a program in May 2023 with a \$50 budget to demonstrate how to create three mocktails from books in the library’s

collection—including a recipe for a Rhubarb Blush, featured in *Zero Proof: 90 Nonalcoholic Recipes for Mindful Drinking* by Elva Ramirez. French’s outreach methods, including advertising with University of Wisconsin–Whitewater’s library, attracted a broad age range.

“We’re in a college town and we’re in Wisconsin, which is known as a heavy drinking state,” French says, adding that students who attended the event noted that they were seeking activities not centered around alcohol.

Library staffers say mocktail events are already having a positive effect. “A woman [who came to our event] said she was having a hard time getting her husband out of the house,” French says. “Out of all the programs that we do here, this was the one that he was actually like, ‘I’d go to that.’”

SL’s program also included a discussion about the importance of individuals having sober options at restaurants and bars or during get-togethers. Non-alcoholic drinks can cater to the sober curious, those who don’t drink at all, those who are in recovery, or those who experience overstimulation or other mental health conditions when drinking, Fear notes.

Fear says: “Every one of these topics comes back to the fact that there just aren’t enough spaces for people who would like [to be] social without the need of some form of alcohol lubricant.”

Continued on page 16 ▶

BY THE NUMBERS

Literary Baltimore

1992

Year that Atomic Books—an independent bookstore specializing in books, zines, and comics “for mutated minds”—opened in Baltimore. The shop, located in the city’s Hampden neighborhood, is also where famed filmmaker, actor, and author John Waters picks up his fan mail.

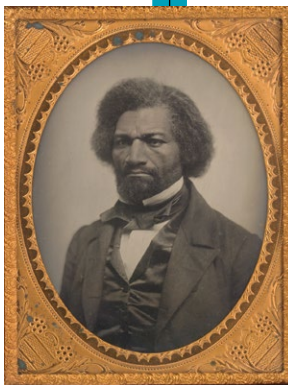


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Number of years that Baltimore has hosted the International Edgar Allan Poe Festival and Awards. The 2023 celebration commemorating the death of the famous poet—who resided in the city for several years and died there in 1849—included tours of the Edgar Allan Poe House and Museum, a coffin-building display, and the Black Cat Ball, a Gothic-themed dance party.

1845

Year that Frederick Douglass published his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. The famous abolitionist lived in Baltimore as a child before escaping north to freedom in 1838. Visitors to the city can tour several historic sites tied to Douglass’s life (bit.ly/Douglass-Landmarks).



300,000

Number of volumes held at Johns Hopkins University’s George Peabody Library (GPL), the largest library collection in Baltimore. GPL’s holdings include a first-edition copy of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* and a 1617 edition of *Don Quixote*. The ornate, Beaux-Arts building has been used as a filming location for TV shows and movies, including the film *Sleepless in Seattle*. ●

Show Us Your Beautiful New Library

American Libraries is now accepting submissions for the 2024 Library Design Showcase, our annual feature celebrating new and newly renovated libraries of all types. The showcase will appear in the September/October issue.

We are looking for examples of innovative library architecture that address patrons' needs in unique, interesting, and effective ways. We are also interested in submissions from libraries that are approaching design with sustainability, accessibility, and smaller budgets in mind.

LIBRARY DESIGN SHOWCASE

If your library is on the cutting edge, we want our readers to know. To be eligible, projects must have been completed between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024.

To have your library considered, send a completed submission form (bit.ly/DesignShowcaseForm24) and at least five high-resolution digital images with photographer credits to americanlibraries@ala.org via Dropbox or another file-sharing service. **The submission deadline is May 1, 2024.** Unfortunately, not all submissions can be featured.

View last year's showcase at bit.ly/Design-Showcase-23. For more information, email americanlibraries@ala.org.



Middle Country Public Library
in Centereach, New York



Sewickley (Pa.) Library hosted a master class in sober mixology in partnership with Harold's Haunt, a local bar that offers both non-alcoholic and alcoholic cocktails.

◀ Continued from page 15

Taking a shot

For librarians hosting mocktail programs on their own, the key is to practice making each drink before the event to help ensure the program runs smoothly, French advises. Practicing also provides an opportunity to confirm you have the right equipment, she adds, like cocktail shakers and muddlers.

Many bars and restaurants have alcohol-free cocktails on their menus, Fear notes, so initiating a partnership can be as simple as asking. "Don't rule out bars and restaurants as potential program partners," she says. "Getting a 'yes' can lead to greater benefits than even originally envisioned."

While GFPL's inaugural event incorporated educational materials and speakers about substance abuse, the second event's focus expanded to a wider audience. "Mocktails aren't just about recovery," says GFPL Board Member Kaylee Cusack. "They're about inclusivity. We want this to be more about bringing multiple parts of the community together." **AL**

CASS BALZER is a writer in Chicago.

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Aydin Kwan, adult services librarian at Sunnyvale (Calif.) Public Library (SPL), uses an induction cooktop available for loan. Since March 2021, SPL has circulated 12 cooktop kits nearly 300 times.

Partly impeding its growth in the US is that these ranges can typically run three times more expensive than their gas counterparts.

But Bunk was able to test this technology through a new program at Forbes Library (FL) in Northampton, Massachusetts. In February 2023, the library began lending induction cooktops for cardholders to try at home.

“Patrons are interested in energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies for personal and practical reasons,” says Mary Biddle, head of borrower services at FL. “Providing information about a new technology—and offering access to that technology if possible—is a core mission of libraries.”

Seeking sustainability

Increasingly, US libraries—particularly those in areas that have begun regulating fossil fuel infrastructure in newly constructed buildings—are giving users the opportunity to sample induction cooking with kits that include electric cooktops and related accessories.

In 2019, Brookline, Massachusetts, became the first municipality outside the state of California to ban the installation of equipment that burns fossil fuels in newly constructed buildings. The law didn’t take effect right away because of legal challenges at the state level. Massachusetts’ legislature adopted a compromise in August 2022 that allowed for towns and cities to adopt or amend ordinances and bylaws to require new

Hot Topic

Patrons check out induction cooktops

By Bill Furbee

When the existing gas range in his home began to malfunction, Brian Bunk considered replacing it with an induction stove. That decision, he says, was due in part to concerns about indoor air quality and a desire to switch to a more environmentally friendly appliance.

Bunk, a father and lecturer at University of Massachusetts Amherst, had heard that induction stoves were better for the environment than gas stoves, but he says he also “wanted to find out how difficult [they were] to use and how steep the learning curve was.”

Induction ranges, like their traditional gas or electric counterparts, heat foods and liquids to adjustable temperatures, but they do so safely and efficiently through an electromagnetic reaction that eliminates harmful emissions—including greenhouse gases like methane and toxic fumes that can be harmful, especially for children.

More than 40 million US home cooks have gas stoves. Induction—which has been around since the 1970s—makes up just 5% of the overall electric cooking market, according to the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers.

construction or major renovations to be fossil fuel-free.

“Brookline citizens are very politically and environmentally engaged,” says Amanda Hirst, director of the Public Library of Brookline (PLB). “There is a keen interest in reducing reliance on fossil fuels and, as such, they look for ways to advocate [for] reducing one’s carbon footprint.”

The Brookline chapter of Mothers Out Front (MOF), a national climate justice organization, donated three induction cooking kits to PLB in 2021. Local MOF members have also held induction cooking demonstrations at PLB, demonstrating simple tasks like boiling water—studies indicate high-power induction cooktops can do this 20%–40% faster than gas stoves—and melting chocolate, and informing patrons of their environmental benefits.

PLB has one induction plate kit available at each of its three branches. The kits include a cooktop, frying pan, and Dutch oven—each designed for induction—and instructions for use. The kits can be borrowed for two weeks at a time. Hirst says they fit nicely into PLB’s Library of Things collection, which includes items like cake pans, energy meters, and maker tools.

“The program has been really well received, and has been a successful partnership,” Hirst says. “[MOF] recognized the need for these kits before we did, and it has helped us fulfill community needs.”

MOF’s Northampton chapter also donated two cooktop sets valued around \$250 to FL in collaboration with local climate organizations Local Energy Advocates of Western Mass and the Center for EcoTechnology. The sets come in a canvas tote bag and include—in addition to the cooktops—a small saucepan with a lid, a small skillet, a binder with detailed instructions, and a flat magnet that patrons can use

to determine if cookware they already own is made of magnetic material that would work in induction cooking.

“Interest is still strong,” says Biddle. “There continues to be a waiting list for a hold eight months [since loans began].”

Unexpected demand

California’s made no secret about its commitment to eliminating fossil fuels from both appliances and vehicles. This includes releasing a state plan in 2022 to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. In Sunnyvale, located in the Bay Area, this commitment has also meant introducing residents to induction cooking.

The 12 induction cooktop kits available for loan at Sunnyvale Public Library (SPL) were purchased with a sustainability grant awarded to the city’s Environmental Services Department. In addition to the induction cooktops, the kits include a NuWave-brand frying pan, a six-quart stainless steel pot with lid, silicone slotted and serving spoons, a testing magnet, and the cookbook *The Best Induction Burner Recipes on the Planet* by Ella Sanders.

The city partnered with local author Anne-Marie Bonneau, also known as the Zero-Waste Chef, to show off the induction cooktops at different community events, says Michelle Perera, director of library and recreation services. Bonneau had previously hosted sustainability-related food programs at SPL, including classes on fermenting vegetables at home and reducing food waste.

“Our patrons are passionate about the environment, as well as technology,” Perera says. “The popularity of our environmental programs gave us a starting point to discuss lending out induction cooktops.”

Librarians agree that the accessories and educational materials allow patrons to get the most out of testing

this cooking method. Perera says SPL has already had nearly 300 checkouts of its induction cooktops since the beginning of the program in March 2021; only two of its initial 14 sets have not been returned.

“There was a bigger audience than anticipated for the cooktops,” Perera says. While this is normally a good problem to have, she says, a limited supply of the expensive items made it “difficult to control patron expectations and frustration” with wait times.

“There is a keen interest in reducing reliance on fossil fuels and, as such, they look for ways to advocate [for] reducing one’s carbon footprint.”

AMANDA HIRST, director of the Public Library of Brookline in Massachusetts

The transition for Bunk did, in fact, come with learning curves, he says. For example, FL’s cooktop doesn’t have the same settings as a regular stovetop. Instead of low, medium, and high heat, the stovetop has specific temperatures. After some research on ideal temperature settings for various cooking needs, like boiling or sautéing, using it became easier, Bunk says.

“Everyone in our family was impressed with the cooktop,” Bunk says, adding that they decided to purchase their own induction range. “I’m glad that the library offers this as a service and am grateful that we were able to try induction cooking before we switched.” ^{AL}

BILL FURBEE is a writer living in Melbourne, Kentucky.



A kiosk at Cleveland Public Library's (CPL) South branch. CPL has four Neighborhood Housing Court kiosks throughout the city to assist residents who need to attend hearings.

individuals who need to appear before the court and need a more convenient hearing location. Now with four kiosks that offer private videoconferencing at branches around the city, CPL is successfully bringing the court to the community.

Kiosk locations were selected based on eviction rate data. Having them available at our branches has removed barriers for residents, many of whom were unable to travel to the courthouse downtown for various reasons to meet their court date.

Cleveland Housing Court Administrative Judge W. Moná Scott said she wanted to make it easier for the public to attend hearings and decrease the number of no-shows resulting from lack of transportation or childcare, or fear of missing work. Since the launch of the first kiosk, bailiffs' sign-in sheets have registered dozens of users.

By partnering with the library, the court system sends a powerful message to the community: We are here to help, not to intimidate.

Cleveland Housing Court purchased the computer kiosk equipment using a 2021 technology grant of \$15,500 from the Ohio Supreme Court. In addition to our South branch, kiosks were added to our Mount Pleasant, Carnegie West, and Hough branches during 2023.

Kiosks complement other legal assistance offered at CPL. Patrons with civil legal issues can register for free advice clinics at the library through a partnership we have with the Legal Aid Society

A Winning Case

Library partners with housing court to bring kiosks to residents experiencing housing issues

The economic impact of the past few years has disproportionately affected renters across the country. In the second half of 2021—when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lifted its pandemic-era eviction moratorium—rents rose at an unprecedented pace, with typical asking rents rising 11% year over year nationwide that September, according to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University.

As rental markets tightened and demand soared, people around the country struggled to keep up. Residents in Cleveland were no exception. To help respond to evictions and other housing issues, Cleveland Housing Court installed videoconferencing kiosks—first in the courthouse, when in-person hearings couldn't be held safely, then later at Cleveland Public Library, to make it more accessible for the public to attend hearings.

BY Felton Thomas Jr. and Tana Peckham

In Cleveland, the struggle for affordable housing has been a pressing issue affecting the lives of many individual residents and families.

Since May 2020, when Cleveland Housing Court's pandemic-related pause on the processing of non-emergency evictions ended, more than 18,200 evictions were filed in the city, according to researchers at Princeton University's

Eviction Lab. As of November 2023, the city's eviction filing rate was 6%, or nearly 6,600 filings over the past 12 months.

To help address this urgent community issue, in July 2022, Cleveland Public Library (CPL) opened our first Neighborhood Housing Court kiosk at the South branch, in partnership with Cleveland Housing Court. Kiosks are available by registration or on a walk-in basis for

GLOBAL REACH

Temple of Books

CHINA Zhejiang Library, one of the oldest public libraries in the country, opened a new main library August 29. The 11-floor, 915,000-square-foot facility includes five stories of bookshelves in its hall, also known as the Temple of Books. The library also contains a children's area, lecture hall, recording studio, exhibition spaces, study areas, and an electronic screen displaying real-time service

data for all public libraries in Zhejiang Province.—*International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions*, Oct. 23



The hall at Zhejiang Library has five stories of bookshelves.

FRANCE A right-wing activist was sentenced to four months in prison for undeclared demonstration and provocation of hatred related to sexual orientation or gender identity after protesting a drag storytime at Saint-Senoux Media Library in Ille-et-Vilaine. Paul Carton admitted using a megaphone

to chant antigay slogans during the protest,

organized by nationalist group L'Oriflamme Rennes. The storytime featured three drag artists—dressed as a robot, a princess, and a snail—and was intended for children ages 3–6.—*Pink News*, Oct. 18

NIGERIA The Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) and the National Library of Nigeria introduced an artificial intelligence-powered e-library during ANA's annual convention November 3. Called Boldscholar, it will serve as a legal deposit center for Nigerian authors to help improve accessibility of Nigerian books and scholarly journals. Nigerian National Librarian Chinwe Anunobi called Boldscholar “the first of its kind in Nigeria and indeed sub-Saharan Africa.”—*Leadership (Abuja, Nigeria)*, Nov. 7; *Boldscholar News*, Nov. 4

BRAZIL The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated Rio de Janeiro as 2025's World Book Capital. In recognition of books' role in transmitting culture and information worldwide, UNESCO names a book capital annually. Selected cities promote books and reading throughout the year. Accra, Ghana, is currently the World Book Capital, and Strasbourg, France, will be World Book Capital for 2024. The title passes to the new city on World Book and Copyright Day (April 23) each year.—*UNESCO*, Oct. 6

SWEDEN Gothenburg City Library was scheduled to be closed November 4 in observance of All Saints' Day. The door was inadvertently left open, however. More than 400 patrons checked out 250 books via the electronic self-service system before library director Annacarin Elf arrived. No theft, vandalism, or other incidents were reported.—*Sweden.se*, Nov. 8 ●

By partnering with the library, the court system sends a powerful message to the community: We are here to help, not to intimidate.

of Cleveland. Its Brief Advice and Referral Clinic allows the public to chat with an attorney about a problem related to money, housing, family, and employment.

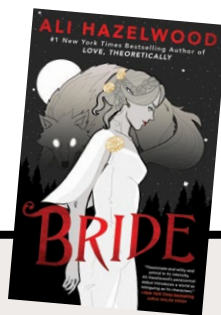
We also partner with LegalWorks, a local nonprofit that provides legal consultation and assistance for qualified, low-income youth and adults in underserved communities. Patrons can make an appointment at one of several branches for legal assistance that could help them move forward in their lives. Assistance could include navigating such topics as expungements, sealing records, obtaining certificates of qualified employment, clearing outstanding warrants, restoring driving privileges, and other matters.

CPL can be a bridge between justice and accessibility, providing vital resources to our neighborhoods. By working with partners, we can make a brighter and more just future for all. **AL**

FELTON THOMAS JR. is executive director and CEO of Cleveland Public Library (CPL). **TANA PECKHAM** is chief strategy officer at CPL. For more information on the Neighborhood Housing Court Kiosk and other legal assistance at CPL, visit cpl.org/legal.

Ali Hazelwood

Author and neuroscientist on becoming an online sensation



just like something and they will start talking about it, and then their friends will see it and love it too.

What motivates you to keep writing? Usually, when I am writing one book, I get an idea for another book, and I cannot wait to get to the point where I can write the other book, because that [becomes] my main interest. I get very inspired by the things I watch and enjoy. I'll watch something, and there will be a specific piece of plot that really tickles me. My friend calls this *shiny object syndrome*, where I'm always chasing a new plot bunny.

What do you make of the recent wave of book challenges and bans?

It's so concerning, and it's very scary. It's very arbitrary. As I read about it, most of these banning efforts are by very few groups that are incredibly active and obviously have agendas that are clearly, even if not explicitly, trying to hurt marginalized communities.

These are books that are going to save lives. Young people are trying to figure themselves out. [It makes] a difference for a young queer person to have access to literature about people like themselves that says, "It's gonna get better. You are valid." It truly shocks me that people who are [banning books] do not look in the mirror and think, "I am the villain in this situation."

What role have libraries and librarians played in your life?

The library was everything for me. I grew up in Italy, and I remember I could literally walk to my library. The librarian knew my name. I felt seen. I'm still a very big library user. I feel like librarians have so much impact on people, and especially young people, who are trying to figure out what they are, what they like, and what they want to do. **AL**

Romance author and doctor of neuroscience Ali Hazelwood saw her 2021 debut, *The Love Hypothesis*, become a *New York Times* bestseller and go viral on TikTok. Readers praised the book—derived from a piece of Star Wars fan fiction Hazelwood had written—for its classic tropes and STEM themes. Though she is most known for novels set among the halls of academia, her forthcoming novel, *Bride* (Berkley, February), is a step into paranormal romance. *American Libraries* spoke with Hazelwood about internet fame, her inspirations for *Bride*, and what role libraries play in her life.

BY Diana Panuncial

What is the inspiration behind your new book, *Bride*? Paranormal romance raised me. This book is very much an homage to Nalini Singh, J. R. Ward, Kresley Cole, and Christine Feehan. I read all their books when I was a teenager, and I love them so much. Most of their books have a nugget of the trope of the *fated mates* [characters brought together by destiny] in them. That was always, to me, the most romantic and the most larger-than-life trope that I could think of. My readers know me as

someone who writes contemporary romantic comedies with STEM themes. Who knows if they will follow me in the paranormal and fantasy worlds? I'm really excited about it, and I hope people like it. I know it's different from what I've done before. Fingers crossed.

What's the importance of setting your books in STEM workplaces?

Most of my life has been spent in academia. When I started writing, it served as a creative outlet. More than wanting to represent women in STEM, it was about writing my own lived experience and making it more interesting. [Academia is] such a rough environment that it's fun to try and see it as something that you can make fun of.

What was your reaction to going viral on TikTok with your debut?

I remember not fully knowing what TikTok even was when my friend was like, "Did you know that *The Love Hypothesis* has 2 million views?" There were these influencers who found the book and they were amazing. That was just a stroke of luck, being at the right place at the right time. It really speaks to the strength of #BookTok as this grassroots movement where people





“What kind of society do we want to live in? Where do we want public discourse to exist? How do we want to control information and knowledge? I think if the library didn’t exist, we would need it. But in today’s particular version of Western democratic capitalism, it is very difficult to envision how that would come about.”

Boston Public Library President **DAVID LEONARD**, in “Why We Need Public Libraries Now More than Ever,” *Boston*, November 12.

“I do think a lot of cultural baggage around gaming has shifted, though. I imagine that when the novel started, people were having similar conversations about how dangerous they could be, but eventually every form finds its footing. Games are an art form like anything else.”

Author and critic **CARMEN MARIA MACHADO**, in “Carmen Maria Machado: ‘The Cultural Baggage around Gaming Has Shifted,’” *The Guardian*, November 19.

“To get to make displays of picture books for children at the very place that taught me to love books, where I used to take out books to read with my parents at bedtime, felt immensely satisfying in a way I’d never experienced before. It went beyond satisfaction and became healing.”

Writer and library worker **JEFFREY DAVIES**, “How Working in a Library Healed My Inner Child,” *Book Riot*, October 16.

“The history of book banning is vast. Driven by diverse motivations, be it politics, religious beliefs, or concerns about young readers, it’s a manifestation of the eternal tussle between information freedom and the desire for control. As Alabama grapples with these issues, it’s clear that the essence of this contention goes beyond mere books. It is, in essence, a battle over the narrative that will shape the minds of the next generation.”

Editor **BILL BRITT**, “A Brief Examination of Defunding Libraries in Alabama,” *Alabama Political Reporter*, October 18.

WE DON'T “CO-PARENT” WITH FASCISTS

Sign held by LGBTQ rights advocate **APRIL GABRIEL-FERRETTI**, in “Moms for Liberty Event in Nazareth Library Met with Protest,” *Lehigh Valley (Pa.) News*, October 14.

2023

YEAR IN REVIEW

A look back at news that affected libraries and library workers

Evolving services for incarcerated readers

The new *Standards for Library Services for the Incarcerated or Detained* were approved this past summer at ALA's 2023 Annual Conference and Exhibition in Chicago. The document is the first update to the original standards published in 1992, expanding their scope and recognizing the full continuum of incarceration. In April, US Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II (D-Mo.) introduced the Prison Libraries Act of 2023, which, if passed, would provide \$60 million over six years to update materials and hire librarians in correctional institutions.



Authors push back on AI

The Authors Guild and 17 authors, including George R. R. Martin and Jodi Picoult, filed a class-action lawsuit in September against OpenAI, the company behind the AI-powered chatbot ChatGPT. The suit claims that the authors' copyright was violated when the company used their works as part of the data set used to train ChatGPT. The lawsuit is ongoing as of late November.



Natural disasters continue to strike libraries

Climate change drastically affected libraries and their communities, with 2023 marking the hottest year on-record globally. In the US, a category EF-4 tornado damaged Mississippi libraries in March, historic flooding shuttered several libraries across Vermont in July (below), and deadly wildfires on Hawaii's island of Maui destroyed libraries in August.





Court decision restricts Internet Archive book lending

In *Hachette v. Internet Archive* (IA), the US district court for the Southern District of New York granted an injunction in August against IA's lending of digitized copies of in-copyright books. These titles were available through IA's Open Library and National Emergency Library projects. The injunction includes only books otherwise available in electronic format, and IA can still provide access via interlibrary loan and to people with qualified print disabilities. IA intends to appeal the decision.



Library programs, services meet needs

In a year of adversity, library workers remained steadfast in their support of patron needs (bit.ly/AL-Trends). Community fridges, medical wellness kits (above), and free hygiene packages equipped patrons and students with necessities. Debate clubs, teen artist-in-residence programs, and gender-affirming closets provided means for self-expression. And Wi-Fi benches, cellphone lending programs, and home deliveries for new parents kept people connected.

Simon & Schuster sold to private equity firm

In August, entertainment and media company Paramount announced it had sold Simon & Schuster to private equity firm KKR. The \$1.6 billion deal came months after a federal judge blocked a sale to Penguin Random House, a rival Big Five publisher, citing further consolidation of the book publishing industry. KKR also owns OverDrive, a leading provider of digital content to libraries.



SIMON & SCHUSTER



Hall resigns

Tracie D. Hall announced in early October that she was stepping down as ALA executive director. Hall had been in the role since February 2020, joining two weeks before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. During her tenure, she helped secure the largest unrestricted grants in ALA's history. For her service and efforts, Hall received numerous recognitions and awards, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Book Foundation in 2022 (above)—becoming only the second librarian to receive the honor—and was on *Time* magazine's 2023 TIME100 list.



FCC offers grants to promote Affordable Connectivity Program

On March 10, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced \$66 million in grants to fund projects that promote its Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) through partner organizations across the US. ACP provides discounted internet services for eligible households and households on qualifying tribal lands. Libraries are eligible to apply for outreach grants, which offer funding and resources to help increase participation in ACP and reach historically underserved communities.

RISING CHALLENGES, BANS



Another record year for book challenges

Preliminary data from the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) through August 31 showed a 20% increase in reported book challenges for 2023—surpassing the record set in 2022. The data also showed an increase in challenges that targeted multiple titles, with libraries in 11 states receiving challenges that included 100 or more books. These challenges targeted 1,915 different titles, most of which are books written by or about people of color or LGBTQIA+ people.



Illinois passes law designed to deter book bans

On June 12, Illinois Gov. J. B. Pritzker signed into law a bill that would withhold state funds for libraries that remove books for partisan reasons or refuse to adopt ALA's Library Bill of Rights or similar language. The law, which goes into effect January 1, 2024, is considered the first of its kind in the nation, although California passed a similar bill covering schools in September.

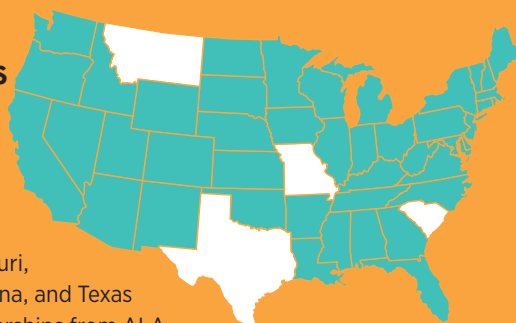
Freedom to Read Statement turns 70

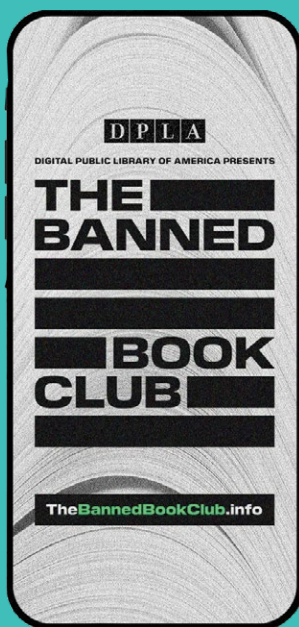
On June 25, ALA celebrated the 70th anniversary of its Freedom to Read Statement by calling on publishers, authors, libraries, and others in the book community to join a list of signatories in affirming their commitment to this guiding document. Hundreds signed on to the statement, which begins:

“The freedom to read is essential to our democracy.”

State libraries cut ties with ALA

Amid the national fight over book bans, state libraries in Missouri, Montana, South Carolina, and Texas withdrew their memberships from ALA. Conservative lawmakers in several other states have called for the same. Some states cited ALA's stance on book challenges and bans, while others took issue with a 2022 tweet made by ALA President Emily Drabinski.





Libraries launch book ban workarounds

To help circumvent book bans, several libraries made digital titles available beyond their service areas. In 2023, a few joined Books Unbanned, an initiative launched the prior year at Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library. The program allows young adults nationwide to borrow ebooks from participating libraries. The Digital Public Library of America debuted its Banned Book Club geotargeted app (left), allowing users to borrow titles banned in their area. And ALA joined the “Books for All” campaign from New York Public Library to offer free digital access to Teen Banned Book Club picks.

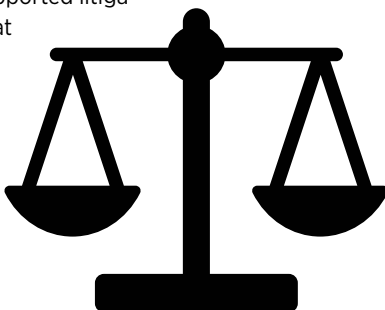
Bomb threats in libraries across the country

A rash of bomb threats against public and school libraries intensified this year, forcing some libraries and schools to temporarily close their doors. These threats included facilities in California, Illinois, Iowa, and Oklahoma, among others. In many cases, these threats appear to be linked to book challenges and objections to programming and displays that reflect the experiences of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people.



Intellectual freedom enters the courtroom

Many libraries, booksellers, and publishers—as well as ALA’s Freedom to Read Foundation and other advocates—joined lawsuits against book bans, alleging they violate First Amendment rights. They supported litigation efforts in Arkansas, Florida, and Texas that aimed to restrict or remove access to books. One notable decision was in Llano County, Texas, in which several community members sued the local government over book removals and won in district court. A county commission vote to close the library following the ruling was unsuccessful.



Obama writes open letter to librarians

On July 17, former President Barack Obama published an open letter to US librarians in an era of increasingly frequent book challenges and sometimes politically motivated, highly personal attacks against those who resist them. The letter, which addressed librarians, read in part:

“In a very real sense, you’re on the front lines—fighting every day to make the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions, and ideas available to everyone.”



REFERENDA ROUNDUP 2023:

Campaign Stories

Lessons learned
from local elections

BY Ryan Ireland



A yard sign developed by Neighbors United for Progress in support of Columbia County (Wash.) Rural Library District is displayed by a resident.

In last year's Referenda Roundup, *American Libraries* noted the growing trend of organized groups of voters fighting library levies due to those groups' opposition to libraries carrying materials by and about LGBTQ people.

The primary and general election cycles—as well as 2023's special elections—demonstrate that politically driven opponents continue to threaten the library's existence, especially in smaller, rural areas.

Overall, library measures across the US continue to pass at a high rate. However, in many communities, the discourse over what materials can be held in certain sections of their libraries has escalated to people introducing ballot measures seeking to defund, shut down, or weaken the library's authority. Tried and true campaign messaging, like touting a library's return on investment, has been supplanted by issues of free speech and censorship. Razor-thin margins determined the future of many libraries this past year.

One constant is the support from Friends groups, foundations, volunteers, and advocates at the core of successful campaigns. Many libraries are also seeking the support of strategists and legal counsel to navigate these unprecedented times.

DAYTON, WASHINGTON

Defunding measure has day in court instead of the polls

An effort to dissolve Columbia County (Wash.) Rural Library District (CCRLD) was decided in court rather than at the ballot box, because

POPULATION SERVED:
4,042

REFERENDUM DETAILS:
Dissolve the library district

RESULT:
Blocked from ballot in court

of a lawsuit filed by the local political action committee Neighbors United for Progress (NUP). Columbia County Superior Court Commissioner Julie Karl blocked the proposed dissolution measure after finding evidence of fraud in the petitioning process and unconstitutionality in the dissolution process (bit.ly/columbia-ballot).

The single-location library is in the city of Dayton, Washington, but it provides services to the entire county of about 4,000 people. In recent years,

CCRLD has faced book challenges, particularly against those with LGBTQ+ content, as well as challenges against its value as a tax-funded entity (bit.ly/CCRLD-referendum).

Jessica Ruffcorn, a resident of the library district and mother of two, started a petition to place the dissolution measure on the upcoming ballot. By state law, Ruffcorn needed signatures from 10% of voters from the county's unincorporated areas to put the measure on the ballot. This meant Dayton residents were not included in the signature collection and would not have been allowed to vote in the referendum.

After NUP Chair Elsie Severe enlisted help from an attorney, two issues with the proposed measure quickly came to light. First, the measure had been misrepresented. Five petitioners came forward (anonymously out of fear of retaliation) and stated they thought the petition was for moving or removing

challenged library books, not dissolving the library entirely.

Second, while Ruffcorn ultimately collected more signatures for the petition to compensate for those ruled invalid, Severe's lawyer also argued the measure itself would be unconstitutional. Under the current voting model, only voters in the unincorporated part of the county would be allowed to vote on the measure, even though CCRLD also serves—and is physically located in—Dayton, where three-quarters of county residents live and pay taxes to support the library. In her ruling, Karl sided with NUP, saying, "We did away with taxation without representation a long time ago."

Severe and Lorna Barth, president of Friends of the Dayton Memorial Library, credit their partnership and combined resources for the victory. Barth notes that in addition to Severe's intellect and drive, the optics of one young mother countering the narrative led by another young mother are important. Severe agrees, adding that similar campaigns need to gear their messaging toward conservative viewpoints. "It's never easy to counter their narrative," Severe says. "They say, 'We're saving our children.' And as a mother, I said, 'Enough is enough. You won't tell me how to raise my children.'"

Barth suspects the fight over books was a red herring. "It really was a hope to dissolve [CCRLD] and put the library back into the control of the city where it could be run by volunteers and staff chosen by the city council," she says, adding that she thinks the city council does not have the budget, staff, or plans to adequately take care of the library.

The Washington State Legislature is currently considering raising voter petition thresholds for rural library measures to 25% or greater. The deputy secretary of state is also seeking to include public libraries in existing nondiscrimination legislation to make it easier for groups like NUP to challenge discriminatory actions like the removal of books (bit.ly/WAthreshold).

PELLA, IOWA

Library retains its autonomy

If passed, Resolution 6442 (bit.ly/PellaResolution) would have transferred governing power over Pella (Iowa) Public Library (PPL) from the library board of trustees to the city council. “Taken at face value, it didn’t look so problematic,” says Anne McCullough Kelly, chair of Vote No to Save Our Library, a committee formed to oppose the measure. “It was the implication.”

POPULATION SERVED:
10,500

REFERENDUM DETAILS:
Would have stripped authority over library budgets, hiring, and collection development from the library board and given it to the city council

RESULT:
Failed, 2,042–1,954

The implication, McCullough Kelly says, was clear: The development of the library collection would be turned over to the city council, who would be more receptive to removing books from the collection than the board. PPL operates independently from the city in many regards. Its board has control over the budget, the employment of the director, and the curation of the library collection. After an unsuccessful challenge to the frequently targeted book *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe in late 2021, a petition requesting the resolution be voted on at the next city election was submitted to the city clerk (bit.ly/PellaVote) in May 2022.

The resolution garnered national attention, with news stories appearing on CBS, Yahoo News, and a profile in *The New York Times*. Anne Petrie, a member of Vote No, says the national attention did little to affect the contentious local politics.

By midsummer, Vote No was responding to opposition from three political action committees. Petrie says those groups used the same basic message: “Children are in danger because of literature with sexual themes and images.”

To counter this, Vote No canvassed, developed messaging, ran ads, and raised money for their campaign. Independent voters, Petrie says, were the deciding votes. Petrie and McCullough Kelly attribute their success to a campaign that focused on stating facts rather than relying on political party affiliation.

“One of the biggest challenges was telling people that ‘vote no’ is a good thing,” Petrie adds, noting that she fielded clarifications up until election night. In November, the resolution failed by 97 votes and the library remained an independent entity.

Vote No to Save Our Library ran a full-page ad in the *Town Crier* (Pella, Iowa) to counter opposition.



GREAT FALLS, MONTANA

A master plan pays off

Since a 2014 funding reduction, Great Falls (Mont.) Public Library (GFPL) has struggled to stay open 50 hours per week. That 50-hour standard—set by Montana State Library—is required of the state’s public libraries that serve communities larger than 25,000. Failing to meet this threshold would make the library ineligible for state library assistance of about \$30,000 annually.

POPULATION SERVED:
84,000

REFERENDUM DETAILS:
Increased levy from 2 mills to 17 mills

RESULT:
Passed, 7,223–6,604

GFPL serves 84,000 residents in the nearly 3,000-square-mile Cascade County from a single location. In

2023, the library asked voters for a levy to supplement city and county funding to help close financial shortfalls and meet the demand for services. The measure passed with 52% of the vote during a June special election, which will raise nearly \$1.6 million annually, although Great Falls will discontinue a yearly contribution to the library, so the library’s budget will see a net increase of about \$1.2 million.

The timing was meant to avoid staff layoffs and stave off the loss in financial support from the state,

according to GFPL Director Susie McIntyre. Had the levy failed, the library would have been forced to reduce its hours, putting it beneath the 50-hour threshold. With the levy’s passage, the library plans to expand from 18 to 35 employees by the end of 2024.

“We knew it would be close,” McIntyre says of GFPL’s win. She credits the victory to planning, fundraising, and its overall disciplined

approach, which entailed a master plan initiated one year before election day and strict adherence to its messaging. Also key, she says, was the coordination of GFPL's Friends of the Library, Great Falls Public Library Foundation (GFPLF), and the library itself. For example, in the year leading up to the summer election, GFPLF provided funding to conduct focus groups and polling, which provided the ballot initiative committee with messaging for TV spots and mailers. One surprising takeaway, McIntyre notes, was that intellectual freedom was a more persuasive argument than fiscal concerns. "We said the library was protecting the right to read and think," she says, reciting what has become a common talking point for her.

Talking points were specifically developed with opposition in mind. They included: access to reading and resources improve quality of life for everyone; libraries advocate for everyone's right to read and think; libraries are needed to ensure access to educational materials for people who cannot afford to buy books or don't have internet access; libraries need support to support their communities; and libraries are critical safe spaces and learning environments for children. As the special election date approached, the levy faced organized opposition from local conservative group Liberty and Values MT, which advertised against the levy on two billboards and through its Facebook page.

In a petition for injunction filed by GFPL's lawyer in district court in May, GFPL's board of trustees alleged that county elections office volunteers distributed antilibRARY materials in April while on duty (bit.ly/injunction-gf). The coordination of resources and support once again played a critical role as GFPLF secured an attorney who, in turn, successfully requested that the court appoint an election monitor, given issues raised of possible irregularities (bit.ly/monitor-GF). The election process then unfolded without further contest, with the measure securing enough votes to pass.

ROSELLE, ILLINOIS

Defeat, not failure

Voters in Roselle, Illinois, narrowly rejected a \$22 million bond that would have funded the construction of a new library building for Roselle Public Library District's (RPLD) nearly 23,000 residents.

In 2018 and 2021, RPLD conducted public sessions and community surveys on the library's needs and support. Executive Director Samantha Johnson says this research indicated that residents consider the library building "dark, uninviting, and outdated," especially when compared with nearby libraries. The library board unanimously decided to move forward with "a modern and highly functional library

to meet current and future needs of adults and children alike" (bit.ly/RoselleBond).

Heading into the April 4 election, polling data showed voters evenly split. The measure was ultimately defeated by 22 votes. Organized opposition to the levy was minimal and largely contained to Facebook groups in which the levy was specifically addressed.

"We don't consider the referendum defeat to be a failure," Johnson says. "Leaders in the community made a point to say to us that such a close outcome on the first attempt was something to look at positively in Roselle."

RESULT:
Failed,
1,476-1,456

POPULATION SERVED:

22,744

REFERENDUM DETAILS:

\$22 million bond to construct a new library



A rendering of a proposed makerspace in a new facility for Roselle (Ill.) Public Library

Johnson attributes the bond defeat to the proposed design of the library. A preelection survey showed 8% of respondents expressing dislike for it, asking questions about the building's aesthetics, cost, and place within the community. "I think we were hearing that we didn't engage enough with our community before finalizing the concept that was used for the referendum," Johnson says.

Since the election, RPLD has continued to hold focus groups and started Coffee with the Library Board events where residents can meet with library trustees to discuss community concerns. The board is using these open-ended conversations to better understand the wants and needs of the community.

Campaigning by the numbers

On November 7, Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Ohio) Public Library (CHCPL) passed a 1.5 mill, 10-year levy with 57% of the vote. While the margin of victory is impressive, many other important factors added up to a successful campaign, CHCPL's second in five years.

In 2018, the public approved a \$19 million levy with 63% of the vote (bit.ly/AL-Referenda18). That money funded a master plan that included building repairs and improvements for CHCPL's 41 locations (bit.ly/CHCPL-Masterplan). At the time, 10 locations were 85 years old or older, and three were not ADA compliant.

Library administrators sought the 2023 levy to renew a levy from 2013 and increase the rate from its previous 1 mill. The increase would provide funding to see the renovations through and compensate for rising expenses, particularly related to aging buildings and digital materials, in the face of declining state support. As with all public libraries in Ohio, CHCPL receives a share of the state's Public Library Fund. Since the 2009 recession, the fund has declined from 2.2% of the state's general budget to 1.7%. In the intervening years, many Ohio libraries have sought local levies for continued financial support.

CHCPL director Paula Brehm-Heeger credits an "outward focus" campaign for the levy's passage. "We started 18 months ago," she says, adding, "You have to talk to people."

Over the course of those 18 months, Brehm-Heeger gave 24 public presentations on CHCPL's master plan. Leading up to the election, she met weekly with the library board to develop a consistent message they could use to educate voters. The core elements of this message were the need to continue building improvements and the incredible popularity of digital materials available

through the library. Wait times for digital items were outpacing physical materials, much to the confusion of the public.

Explaining how digital material licensing for libraries works, and how it affects wait times, was the central challenge, Brehm-Heeger says. Increasing access would require buying more licenses, which costs more money. "Once we were able to emphasize the licensing element, we were able to show what we were up against," she says.

A local news story (bit.ly/CHCPL-ebook) explained the cost differential using a popular Stephen King title and clarified the prices for paperback (\$17), ebook (\$64.99), and audiobook (\$99) versions. That explanation also calculated a \$2 million cost to bring the wait times of

digital materials in line with their physical counterparts. The message, Brehm-Heeger says, "landed" with voters.

As the public became more well-informed of CHCPL's finances, the Friends of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and the Library Foundation of Cincinnati and Hamilton County formed a team of volunteers and hired a professional strategist. With surveys showing strong support for CHCPL, the groups focused on getting out the vote, Brehm-Heeger says. However, opposition came from Cincinnati's chamber of commerce, which issued a statement praising the library's literacy efforts before stating it would not support higher property taxes.

In the three months leading up to the election, volunteers canvassed neighborhoods, phone banked, and sent 6,000 handwritten postcards to eligible voters. On election day, volunteers stood outside the boundaries of polling sites and passed out information about the levy, which Brehm-Heeger calls a "pivotal role" in making a last-minute case for the levy. The combined efforts of the board, foundation, Friends, and volunteers led to a victory at the ballot box.

POPULATION SERVED:

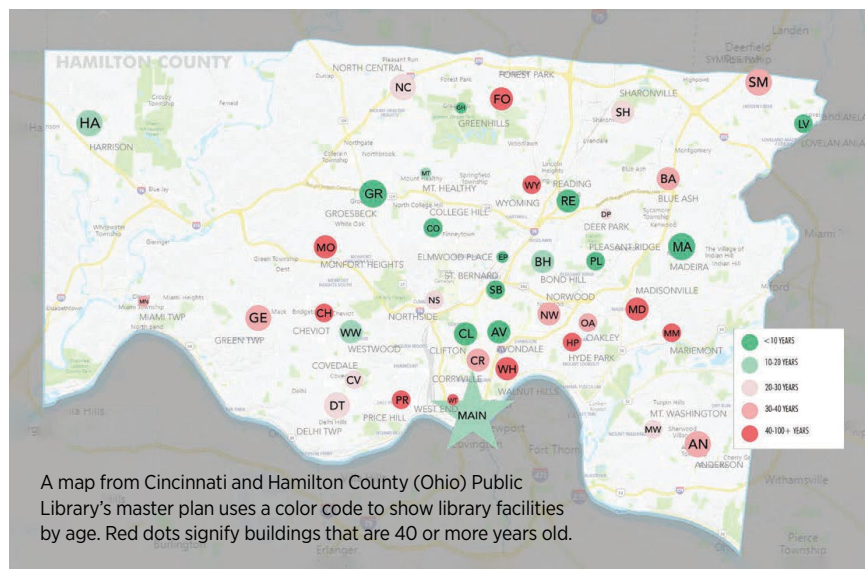
825,000

REFERENDUM DETAILS:

Renewed and increased levy from 1 to 1.5 mills for 10 years

RESULT:

Passed, 156,797-120,590



BRANSON, MISSOURI

Turning a private library public

For most of its 90-year existence, Taneyhills Library (TL) in Branson, Missouri, has been privately funded, deriving \$187,000 of its revenue from sales at an onsite used book and thrift store.

In 1975, TL served 5,000 people, and the 20,000-square-foot, volunteer-run facility that contains both the library and the store was adequate. In recent years, TL's service area has grown to more than 40,000 as Branson has developed as a tourist destination over the past few

decades, and existing fundraising is no longer sufficient to support operations and the community's needs. A ballot measure to create a new publicly funded library district passed in August by 46 votes.

POPULATION SERVED:
40,000

REFERENDUM DETAILS:
Established a publicly funded library district with a 1.8 mill levy

RESULT:
Passed,
2,366–2,320

only 35% of the vote. Two years after the failed campaign, TL received a \$350,000 grant from the local Stanley & Elaine Ball Foundation to renovate the children's area and upgrade technology.

"We wanted to show the community that the library was not a warehouse of dusty books but [a] destination zone for children," says Director Marcia Schemper-Carlock. "It clearly became the catalyst we needed." For the next eight years, TL worked to demonstrate its value to the community before preparing to go back to the ballot box.

This was not TL's first attempt to become a public entity. In 2013, a proposed 1.5 mill levy failed, gaining



A billboard encouraging votes in favor of publicly funding Taneyhills Library.

Schemper-Carlock says having a properly funded campaign team with deep connections to the community, including a former Branson mayor, a retired school communications director, and a political marketing expert, helped secure the levy's passage. Before the campaign, TL enlisted the help of consultants who identified the school districts in Branson and nearby Hollister as 80% of their voter base. TL's board also unanimously agreed that if the levy failed, lack of funds would force a permanent closure at the end of 2023. The prospect of shuttering became part of the campaign messaging.

In the weeks leading up to the vote, opponents—whom Schemper-Carlock calls "social media arsonists"—began posting regularly on their Vote No for Public Funding for Taney County Library

Facebook pages, including incorrect information about the library's so-called political agenda and the proposed tax hike. The levy committee was ready. "We turned our campaign cavalry loose, and they responded with facts," she says, referring to more than 30 community members who patrolled social media to correct misinformation.

The measure narrowly prevailed, and with the levy in place, the library board plans to increase staffing from three full-time employees and a part-time director to seven full-time and three part-time employees, including a full-time director, in 2024. **AL**



RYAN IRELAND is a freelance writer based in Cleveland.

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Library Champions make the Libraries Transform campaign possible. This campaign educates and advocates to raise awareness of the value of libraries. In 2023, Libraries Transform grew to more than 16,500 participants, all committed to fostering public support for libraries and the ways they benefit their communities. Library Champions ensure that libraries across the country continue to thrive and grow.

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 <p>data axle reference solutions</p> <p>data-axle.com</p>	 <p>SAGE Publishing</p> <p>sagepub.com</p>	 <p>SPRINGER NATURE</p> <p>springernature.com</p>	 <p>Taylor & Francis Group an informa business</p> <p>tandf.co.uk/libsite</p>

LIBRARIES TRANSFORM[®]



In Their Own Words

Libraries amplify voices and forge connections through oral history projects

by Emily Udell

Steve Phan, a park ranger with the US National Park Service (NPS), remembers driving to his office in Washington, D.C., after the first shutdown of the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. “There was literally no one on the road,” he says. “It felt post-apocalyptic.”

Phan had volunteered for essential duties, including monitoring the parks that remained open, and had become busier than ever as people turned increasingly to outdoor activities. In January 2021, his work took him to central Kentucky, where NPS had recently acquired Camp Nelson, a former US Army base that was once a destination for many Black people fleeing slavery during the Civil War.

Photo: Jessamine County (Ky.) Public Library

Steve Phan discussed moving from Washington, D.C., to Kentucky amid COVID-19 for Jessamine County (Ky.) Public Library's (JCPL) Pandemic Stories Project.

“We had to figure out how to build a new national park while maintaining social distancing, wearing masks inside, and not opening the visitor’s center,” Phan recalls. As COVID-19 dangers lingered, he eventually moved permanently to Kentucky, where he was interviewed about his atypical work experiences by Carrie Green, user education librarian at

Jessamine County (Ky.) Public Library (JCPL). Phan’s account has become part of the library’s Pandemic Stories Project (bit.ly/JCPLstories).

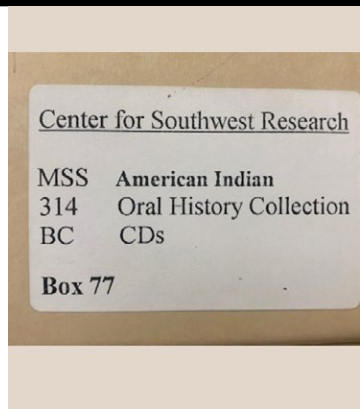
“[The pandemic] was a life-changing experience for everyone,” Phan told Green. “The residual impacts will affect us for generations.”

With the goal of preserving patrons’ COVID-19 experiences, JCPL was inspired to delve into oral history for the first time. Oral histories are typically captured by asking subjects questions to recount their memories while recording audio or video, which is usually transcribed before being archived. The subject may reflect on their own experiences, as well as their perceptions of historical events, cultural institutions, or the times in which they lived, depending on the focus of the project. Some librarians, like Green, conduct the oral history interviews themselves.

But with these projects come challenges with preservation and inclusion. Some institutions are revisiting old collections to undertake the significant and costly enterprise of updating them to modern formats, such as converting reel-to-reel tapes to digital files. Others are trying to approach their collections with cultural sensitivity and equity in mind, whether by collecting narratives from historically marginalized groups, soliciting reactions to social issues and political events, or addressing older material that may not have been obtained ethically.

Adding context to community

In 2021, Houston Public Library (HPL) received a \$50,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant to digitize nearly 500 interviews. These interviews were collected by the Houston Oral History Project over several decades and reflect the voices of residents who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color. The histories, recorded from the 1970s to the present, are currently maintained by HPL’s Houston History Research Center (HHRC) and African American History Research Center (AAHRC). As they are digitized, they are added to HPL’s Digital



This recording is under review by a Community Curation Team and is not currently available.

If you have information or questions about the recording, contact:

cswrref@unm.edu



Archives so that students, organizations, and other members of the public can access them.

Collection highlights include stories about a 1963 visit that President John F. Kennedy made to the city, Latino and Latina veterans of World War II, and alumni of the Gregory School, the city’s first public school for Black children, which opened in 1872. The Gregory School interviews, which feature students who graduated from the school between the 1920s and 1960s, are among AAHRC Manager Miguell Ceasar’s favorite, because the former school has become home to the center.

“They were thriving, and they were learning, and they were proud people,” says Ceasar. “It’s a great oral history to listen to, especially for our site.”

In their interviews, alumni also discussed what it was like growing up in and around Freedmen’s Town, a neighborhood settled in Houston’s Fourth Ward in 1865 by the first 1,000 formerly enslaved individuals from nearby plantations in Texas and Louisiana.

Today, Freedmen’s Town has largely been gentrified, Ceasar says, and many people moving in may not be aware of the area’s history. But digitizing these oral histories helps to provide valuable context for new residents. “[These stories are] a window into the past of what things used to be, that without other means, would probably go undocumented or unrecorded,” he says.

Oral traditions hold special meaning in the African American community, Caesar notes. Because it was illegal for enslaved people to read or write, they relied heavily on word of mouth to pass down history, meaning that “every story is significant,” he says.

HPL is also using a small portion of its ARPA funds to collect a new set of oral histories, called Memory Projects. These are focused on collecting recorded interviews from community members living through a cultural moment, as opposed to looking back on the past. Topics discussed include

At University of New Mexico’s Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections in Albuquerque, oral histories currently under review by tribes cannot be accessed by the public.

the COVID-19 pandemic and the June 2020 demonstrations that occurred in the wake of the killing of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police Department officers. Librarians and archivists from both HHRC and AAHRC are conducting these interviews.

“People who we interact with are surprised that we think what they have to say is important,” says Sheena Wilson, assistant manager and lead archivist at AAHRC. “We try to centralize that ‘everyday person’ so they’re able to see how what they’ve done fits into the larger historical narrative.”

Reclaiming the narrative

At University of New Mexico’s (UNM) Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections (CSRSC) in Albuquerque, Jolene Dezbah Manus, curator of Native American Collections, is digitizing oral histories that were collected from Indigenous

communities across the US between 1966 and 1972 and are now housed at academic libraries.

UNM is among six other universities—along with the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums—participating in a \$1.6 million digitization effort funded by the Doris Duke Foundation. CSRSC began working on this project in September 2021, and its collection contains nearly 800 interviews from members of approximately 50 tribes.

In addition to digitizing these oral histories, CSRSC is hoping to address harm caused by past interview processes. Many of the original oral histories were collected without informed consent from their subjects or by using insensitive or

“The whole idea was to get people talking and sharing and learning, and [realizing] we can process together, and we didn’t go through this alone.”

LES LEHMAN, community connections librarian at Jessamine County (Ky.) Public Library

dehumanizing approaches, says Manus, who is Diné, Omaha, and Tsalagi (Cherokee), and part of the Navajo Nation. The interviews were conducted by academics—some of whom were Indigenous and others who were not—often with little training, especially on how to respect the culture of the participants, she says.

Part of the digitization project includes a thorough review process led by the tribes whose members gave their

DIY Documenting

At Oak Park (Ill.) Public Library (OPPL), patrons can check out oral history kits to pursue their own projects. The kits, which were created in 2019, include iPods, a microphone, headphones, and a laminated list of instructions and possible questions.

Apple discontinued iPods in 2022, but they’re still suitable for recording MP3 interviews. Oral History in the Digital Age (bit.ly/AL-OHDA), an online clearinghouse from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the nonprofit Vermont Folklife (bit.ly/AL-VTOH) both have guides to resources for capturing oral history, including recommendations for recorders and microphones.

To create the questions, OPPL took inspiration from the national nonprofit StoryCorps—which collects diverse personal histories that are housed in the Library of Congress—and added community-specific prompts. Questions range from basic (How large was your family? What do you do for a living?) to more thought-provoking (What wisdom would you pass on to your grandchildren? Have you experienced any miracles? What’s your favorite Oak Park memory?).

OPPL created the kits using funds from a \$12,000 grant awarded by Age Options, a local nonprofit that advocates for seniors and their caregivers. The library

testimonies. This aims to ensure that tribes determine who may have access to a story, and under what circumstances. For example, tribal members may determine that some stories in the archive can be fully accessible to anyone who wishes to review them, while other stories may only be accessed by the tribe or only certain members of it. Tribal members can also decide if they want library workers present during the review or not, and whether oral histories should be held at the center or made available online.

“I have come to know that there are things in the [oral histories] that should not be accessible to everyone,” Manus says, “even for me, as a Diné woman. For that reason, I don’t listen to anything from any of the tribes that [are not my communities]—that’s not my purview.”

One of Manus’s roles in the project is to contact tribes and inform them that the project is under way. A unique case that she recalls is when members of the Cabazon Band of Cahuilla

also obtained a subscription to the software BiblioBoard, which staff spent time learning before the project launched.

“We wanted to target it to older adults who had connections to Oak Park,” says Rose Barnes, health and senior services librarian at OPPL. “It’s really a nice way to get out in the community and talk to people. People just instantly open up.”

Any cardholder can check out the kits. However, the pandemic forced the library to shift focus from promoting the kits to other pressing needs. And while five kits were created originally, three have not been returned. One remains in circulation and another travels with the library’s book bike.

“That’s always the tricky thing when you circulate technology,” Barnes says.

OPPL has so far collected 17 oral histories, most of which Barnes collected herself and the rest of which were submitted by community members. They can be accessed through BiblioBoard via the library’s website.

“One of my main aspirations for the project is to capture intergenerational conversations with community members,” she says. “If libraries focus on that aspect, there is a lot of potential to build upon relationships and form deeper bonds.” ●



of California reached out to CSRSC after learning the institution held interviews pertaining to its history. She then sent copies for the tribe to review.

“[Cahuilla members] were really happy because the recordings contained people speaking their languages, and some aspects of the languages they hadn’t heard in a while,” Manus says. “At the same time, they were really cautious.”

The Cahuilla decided to make the documents accessible only to members of the tribe. “They were not in favor of the recordings becoming accessible because of past exploitation of their language,” Manus explains.

Limiting who can access an oral history is one of the key functions of Mukurtu, a content management system and digital access tool developed by researchers and the Warumungu, an Indigenous community in central Australia. The platform’s features can be adjusted to reflect the values of the Indigenous community it serves—for example, restricting

collection access to subsets of a group or making certain materials available seasonally.

In using Mukurtu, CSRSC and its partners also hope to meet the project’s larger digitization goals. This involves converting oral histories from CDs and DVDs (which were initially collected in reel-to-reel, and then cassette formats) to digital formats, along with translating and indexing oral histories, improving access to them, expanding the collection by adding new voices, and developing educational resources.

The process is slow-moving, but CSRSC aims to have 150 histories digitized by the end of 2023. Manus says she hopes that having tribes lead the review process and set their own terms for others’ access helps them feel more empowered in the way their history is documented. The project’s success, Manus says, is “about starting a relationship, starting a talk, and having follow-ups after that to build trust.”



“[These stories are] a window into the past of what things used to be, that without other means, would probably go undocumented.”

MIGUELL CEASAR, manager of Houston Public Library’s African American History Research Center

Aleah Parsons (left), archivist at Houston Public Library’s African American History Research Center, interviews Melba Ozenne, the first female officer in the Department of Public Safety at Texas Southern University in Houston.

‘We can process together’

Oral history projects also allow librarians to capture the evolution of smaller communities or niche groups, so that members may see themselves and their peers documented for posterity.

What started as a small oral history project in the early 1990s grew into a larger effort to document the history of New York Public Library (NYPL) through the perspective of its former employees, members of the New York Public Library Retirees Association (NYPLRA). The project is spearheaded by the association, made up of current and former librarians who use their skills to collect, transcribe, and edit interviews.

The 118 stories recorded so far stitch together a history of NYPL while showing how the lives of its employees have intersected with larger world events, such as the Holocaust and civil rights movement. NYPLRA currently stores its collection on Dropbox but is seeking a permanent home at NYPL.

“Those of us who are working on the project are getting an enormous amount out of it,” says Beth Wladis, a retired NYPL librarian and NYPLRA member who volunteers her time editing transcripts. “We love the work.”

Wladis says she feels honored to help preserve the stories of NYPL retirees, which include memories of immigration, segregation, and economic insecurity—along with tales of connection, charity, and resilience.

“This is not a paying gig, but it’s very important in my life,” Wladis says. “It’s making my retirement so much more fascinating.”

For JCPL’s Pandemic Stories Project, Jessamine County resident Sheila Lovell shared her experience writing daily emails to her grandchildren, which often comprised stories from her life.

“It was very therapeutic for me to think and write one page every day,” Lovell said in her video interview. “I’m hoping [my grandchildren] got something out of it and that they learned a bit more about their grandmother—other than that she makes cookies.”

JCPL had an existing podcast studio convenient for recording stories by those willing to visit the library, as well as an online submission form that invited print, audio, and video contributions from others.

The library solicited submissions detailing any aspect of the pandemic experience: What were you doing when you first heard about COVID-19 and the shutdown? Did the pandemic change your relationships with family and friends? What have you learned during this experience?

“The whole idea was to get people talking and sharing and learning, and [realizing] we can process together, and we didn’t go through this alone,” says Les Lehman, community connections librarian at JCPL.

It was a challenge to get patrons to submit audio and video while the pandemic was still unfolding, Lehman says. The project also got sidelined by the debut of a popular outreach van, Jessamine Events Mobile, which was funded by the same ARPA grant. To keep the oral history project going, staffers created alternative opportunities, like a type-in event in June 2022 where patrons could document their pandemic experiences on typewriters set up at the library.

In total, the library collected 50 narratives across different mediums. Lehman thinks the contributions tended toward documenting the lighter side of life during the pandemic era.

“We got quite a few stories about funny things or things people learned,” she says. “A lot of people realized that they loved the time to explore something else in their life or connect with their immediate family [because of social

distancing]. We didn't necessarily touch their wounds."

In September 2022, JCPL hosted a culminating exhibit where people could hear and view the collected stories and add to them. The library also shared part of the collection on social media.

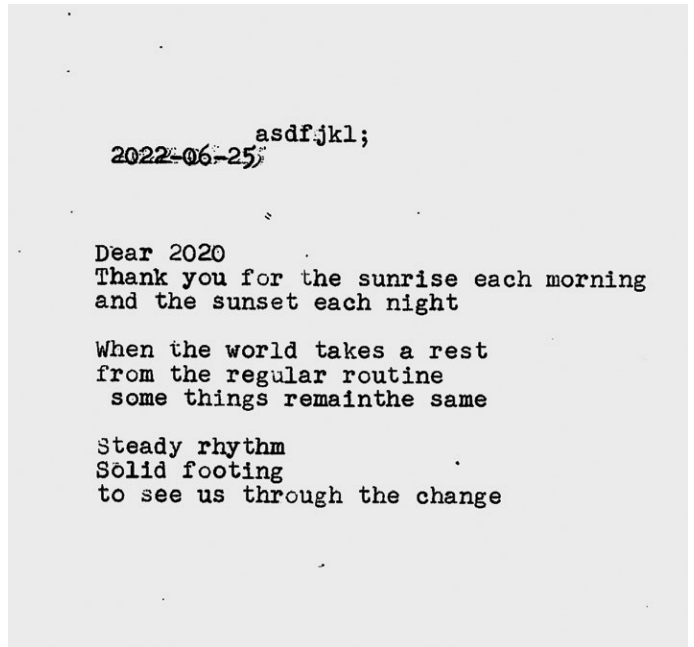
Lehman encourages libraries interested in engaging with oral history to start gathering recordings using smartphones if they don't have sophisticated equipment and to lean on staffers who would excel at interviewing. (See sidebar on p. 38.)

"You should leverage the staff people who enjoy some investigative reporting, who want to get out there and really want to talk to people," she says. "Tackle this project with a lot of joy and you're going to learn a lot." ^{AL}

Jonathan Ashurst, a resident of Lexington, Kentucky, submitted a poem to JCPL's Pandemic Stories Project, which accepted photos, videos, manuscripts, and oral histories.



EMILY UDELL is a freelance writer based in Indianapolis.



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The San José State University School of Information will be in Baltimore for **LibLearnX**. We are so excited to see you there!

| **VISIT** us at Booth #1323

| **JOIN** the SJSU iSchool Current Student & Alumni Networking Meetup (get details at our booth)

| **ATTEND** presentations featuring SJSU iSchool Director Anthony Chow, students and alumni

- Establishing Early Children's Literacy Book Ecosystems in Indigenous Communities: Reading Nation Waterfall
- The Application of UX and Usability Standards in Browser-Based Virtual/Augmented Reality Environments
- Stronger Together: A Summary of Priorities and Best Practices from National Heritage Month EDI Symposiums



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An aerial photograph of Baltimore, Maryland, showing the waterfront area. The image features several modern buildings with large glass facades and triangular roofs, situated along the harbor. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is clear. In the background, more city buildings and a bridge are visible. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

2024

LibLearnX Preview

Baltimore | January 19–22

EDITED BY Diana Panuncial



Photo: Wasin Pummarin/Adobe Stock (harbor); Eli Turner Photography (Norris); Shandon Photography (Armstrong)

LibLearnX heads to the Charm City this year, and what place could *B'more* enticing? The American Library Association's (ALA) LibLearnX conference will be held January 19–22, bringing collaborative learning activities, networking opportunities, celebrations, and author talks to the city of Baltimore. Designed for active learning, the conference will offer more than 100 educational programs in returning formats—Accelerators, Ideas Xchanges, Learning Labs, and ShopTalks—created by and for library workers. New this year are three Timely Topics, categories of sessions pertaining to information professionals' most asked-about issues: artificial intelligence (AI), intellectual freedom, and sustainability.

This preview represents a sampling of the sessions that will be held onsite. (For those interested in attending virtually, see the sidebar on p. 45 to learn about the LLX Digital Experience.) For a full list of sessions and conference information, visit liblearnx.org.



Michele Norris

Main Stage Speaker

Peabody Award–winning journalist **Michele Norris** will open LibLearnX with a discussion of her new book, *Our Hidden Conversations: What Americans Really Think about Race and Identity* (Simon & Schuster, January). The title is a compilation of stories, essays, and photographs that provide an in-depth look at present-day America during a tumultuous era of issues surrounding race, identity, and class. Norris is a columnist for *The Washington Post's* Opinions section and host of the podcast *Your Mama's Kitchen*. **8–9:15 a.m. Saturday, January 20**

Author Speakers in the LLX Studio

Mia Armstrong is a child actor, model, voiceover artist, and activist. In 2022, with her role in the show *Action Pack*, she made history as the first



Mia Armstrong

child with Down syndrome to provide a voice for a cartoon character on Netflix. Her debut picture book, *I Am a Masterpiece!* (Random House Books for Young Readers, January), chronicles her childhood living with Down syndrome.

11 a.m.–noon Sunday, January 21



Antonia Hylton

Antonia Hylton has won Peabody and Emmy awards as a correspondent for NBC News and MSNBC and cohosts the *Southlake* podcast. She will discuss her new book, *Madness: Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum* (Legacy Lit, January), which tells the story of the Crownsville Hospital in

Maryland, one of the nation's last segregated asylums with surviving records, and explores the legacy of how Black families grapple with mental health. **3–4 p.m. Saturday, January 20**

Award-winning author, journalist, and activist **George M. Johnson** will be discussing their 2020 memoir, *All Boys Aren't Blue*. The memoir covers their life growing up Black and queer in the US and addresses topics of racism, gender identity, and toxic masculinity. *All Boys Aren't Blue* was one of ALA's Top 10 Most Challenged Books of 2021 and 2022, and Johnson served as honorary chair for Banned Books Week 2022.



George M. Johnson

Comedian, actor, and author **Jesús Trejo**'s debut picture book, *Papá's Magical Water-Jug Clock*, was published last June. His new children's book, *Raising Mamá's Plantitas* (Minerva, October), is a story about a young boy taking on responsibility and experiencing personal growth. **1–2 p.m. Saturday, January 20**



Jesús Trejo

Education Programs

ALA has four types of active learning experiences during LibLearnX:

★ **Accelerators** are led by facilitators and designed to introduce attendees to new ideas and challenge traditional thinking. Accelerator sessions last approximately two hours.

● **Ideas Xchanges** are about 30 minutes each and feature creative projects shared in peer-to-peer conversations.

▲ **Learning Labs** delve into current issues with action-based instruction and collaborative learning. Sessions are usually one hour and focus on methods, approaches, and opportunities that attendees can immediately apply in their libraries. Learning Labs may include panels, Q&As, polls and surveys, games, and breakout discussions.

■ **ShopTalks** are bite-sized presentations, 15–20 minutes long, that focus on a specific idea, project, or workshop. They're ideal for learning about hot topics and picking up practical tips.

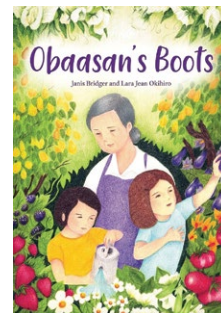
Some of the more than 100 education programs, in eight primary content areas, include:

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

▲ **Breathing Life into Difficult Histories and Engaging Children toward Ethical Citizenship through Fiction**

1–2 p.m. Saturday, January 20

Authors and cousins **Janis Bridger** and **Lara Jean Okihiro** will share how they went from working in elementary and university libraries to writing their 2023 children's novel, *Obaasan's Boots*, inspired by their shared family history. In this session, attendees will learn how to better engage young readers



emotionally with the use of historical fiction.

COLLECTION SERVICES

▲ **From Paper to Practice: Workflow Modeling for Digital Libraries**

2:30–3:30 p.m. Saturday, January 20

Ideal for collection administrators, catalogers, and other librarians seeking to optimize their digital operations, this session will explore how *workflow modeling*—the visual representation of an action or decision—can help identify areas for improvement. Attendees will sketch workflow diagrams reflective of their own practices and consider ways to streamline their processes.

▲ **Circulating Roku Devices with Premium Subscriptions**

4–5 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Hear from librarians at Dayton (Ohio) Metro Library, which in 2022 began circulating more than 200 Roku devices. Each Roku comes with one of 10 streaming services paid for by the library. In the first year of the program, Roku devices were checked out more than 3,300 times.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

▲ **Creating Welcoming and Supportive Libraries for Asylum Seekers and People Experiencing Homelessness and Poverty**

1–2 p.m. Saturday, January 20

Libraries of all types, in all places, serve people who are experiencing poverty and homelessness or seeking asylum. Learn how to provide services that make a difference for those who are unhoused, what types of programs exist to combat period poverty, and what partnerships can be created to assist these affected groups.

▲ **Flip the Fair: Elementary School Students Visit Public Library to Judge Graduate Student Science Projects**

1–2 p.m. Saturday, January 20

At Roanoke (Va.) Public Libraries' (RPL) Flip the Fair event, 200 elementary school students were invited to watch Virginia Tech graduate students deliver presentations on their

LLX DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

Can't join the group in Baltimore? The LLX Digital Experience is a virtual option that offers live and on-demand access to a selection of sessions, including the opening and closing sessions, Youth Media Awards, RUSA Book and Media Awards, author talks in the LLX Studio, a curated selection of education programs, and ALA Governance sessions. ●

research projects. In this session, discover how this joint program helped promote STEM careers to children and welcome them to RPL's STEM lab while giving graduate students an opportunity to practice communicating their research to a new audience.

▲ **Library Advocacy Basics: Creating Lifelong Civic Engagement**

1–2 p.m. Sunday, January 21

In this session, attendees will learn how to collaborate with community members to identify needs, develop realistic advocacy goals, and create a sustainable coalition to bring goals to fruition. **Paul Signorelli**, trainer-consultant and library advocacy training project manager for the California Library Association, will share how to cultivate relationships with key partners, such as legislators, and incorporate storytelling into advocacy efforts.

★ **B'more Collaborative: Building a Successful School and Public Library Partnership**

2–4 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Representatives from Baltimore City Public Schools and Enoch Pratt Free Library will share how their collaboration supports student success through multileveled programming. Attendees will hear about opportunities for partnerships between schools and libraries and how to develop an implementation plan.

■ **Setting International Patrons Up for Success by Dismantling Deficit Thinking**

10:30–10:50 a.m. Monday, January 22

Deficit thinking occurs when a person in power blames the failures of an individual from a marginalized community on perceived deficiencies instead of considering structural inequities. International patrons are particularly vulnerable to this practice. This session will invite participants to reflect on how deficit thinking affects their institution and propose culturally sensitive approaches to combat it.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

▲ **Food Is a Right: The Library's Role in Food Justice**

11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m. Sunday, January 21

The Urban Libraries Council recently convened 20 leaders representing libraries and other organizations committed

to improving food security across the US. Speakers will present data and findings from the meeting and a survey of nearly 200 libraries, along with tips for creating health and nutrition programming, applying for federal programs, and starting seed libraries.

▲ **Cultivating Caregiver Knowledge, Well-Being, and Community to Create a Strong Foundation for Very Young Children**

2:45–3:45 p.m. Sunday, January 21

The first few years of a child’s life can be difficult and demanding for caregivers, especially those who live in underserved communities and often lack assistance, resources, and understanding. Presenters will discuss findings from Project SHIELD (Supporting Healthy Infant Early Learning and Development), a research initiative that explores the experiences and needs of caregivers, and how libraries can get involved in an infant’s early development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

★ **How to Navigate Privacy Issues Involving Youth and Technology**

1–4 p.m. Saturday, January 20

How should librarians navigate the privacy issues that arise when young patrons engage with technology? In this session, participants will apply a theory-based privacy literacy framework to real-world scenarios and map out steps to address privacy concerns in their own institutions.

■ **After the Onboarding: Leveling Up Your Management Style and Your Team’s Potential**

11:55 a.m.–12:15 p.m.
Sunday, January 21

After the initial onboarding process of new library employees, it can be easy to defer future training and development to an as-needed basis. Attendees will leave this session with new ideas for identifying internal opportunities for employees looking to hone their skills and designing a more nuanced track for staff training.

▲ **The Art and Science of Leadership: Combining Soft Skills and Data to Achieve Results**

4–5 p.m. Sunday, January 21

For library leaders, most of the skills needed to navigate challenges related to work culture and relationships aren’t taught in library school. Presenters will discuss the importance of soft skills in leadership and how to combine them with data-driven methodologies to ensure success.

LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

■ **Improving Accessibility of Instructional Materials, One Slideshow at a Time**

2:10–2:30 p.m. Saturday, January 20

Presenters will share best practices for librarians and educators looking to make instructional materials fully accessible. The program will cover usage of elements such as fonts, hyperlinks, alt text, color, and contrast.

■ **Creating Connections: Hosting Intergenerational Book Clubs with Middle Schoolers and Retirees**

10:40–11 a.m. Sunday, January 21

Since 2020, Montgomery County (Md.) Public Libraries’ (MCPL) Little Falls branch and the Jewish Council for the Aging of Greater Washington’s Heyman Interages Center have facilitated a virtual book club with middle school students and retired adult volunteers. Panelists will share the benefits of the partnership, how to conduct a similar book club, and the value of libraries hosting intergenerational programs.

● **Who Said It? Using Role-Playing Games to Understand Perspective and Evaluate Sources**

2:15–2:45 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Librarians from University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas, will present a role-playing game they created to help students understand information, identify an author’s motivation, and recognize biases. Attendees will get a chance to play the game and offer feedback, as well as discuss the pros and cons of including gamification elements in library instruction.

STAY CONNECTED

 Follow facebook.com/
AmericanLibraryAssociation

 Keep up on X, formerly known as Twitter,
with @ALAConferences and #liblearnx24

 Track @americanlibraryassociation
and #liblearnx24 on Instagram

 Visit alaliblearnx.org

LLX MARKETPLACE

The LLX Marketplace, designed for collaboration and learning within an exhibit space, will host more than 100 exhibitors offering the newest titles, products, tools, and services. ●

■ Gender-Supportive School Library Services

4–4:20 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Librarians can retrofit existing library services and create new traditions to foster a culture of safety and positivity for their young patrons. In this session, learn how to support all patrons, particularly those who identify as transgender or nonbinary, with different types of school library services, such as providing gender-neutral bathroom access, free clothing, free replacement student IDs, and administrative support for name changes.

READERS' ADVISORY

▲ Building Community through Personalized Reading Recommendations

2:30–3:30 p.m. Saturday, January 20

Connecting readers with books they'll love or need is an integral part of providing excellent customer service in libraries. Speakers will equip staffers with the knowledge and tools necessary to provide personalized book recommendations that foster a sense of community and ensure inclusivity.

● Readers' Advisory Training: Tips and Techniques

12:15–12:45 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Participants will learn how to use *Booklist* and *Booklist Reader* to keep up with publishing trends and readers' advisory techniques. *Booklist* Senior Editor **Susan Maguire** will facilitate a discussion on staff training exercises that can work in the library.

TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

★ The Application of UX and Usability Standards in Browser-Based Virtual and Augmented Reality Environments

10 a.m.–12:15 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Extended reality (XR) information environments—which include virtual reality (VR), mixed reality, and augmented

reality (AR)—are growing in popularity thanks to how easily they can be accessed on digital devices without the need for a traditional VR headset. This hands-on workshop presented by San José (Calif.) State University's School of Information will cover basic principles of user experience and how to apply them to XR environments.

▲ Learn Interactive Marketing with Augmented Reality Technology

1–2 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Hear from librarians at Patchogue-Medford (N.Y.) Library who used AR to transform their sidewalk-facing windows into an interactive aquarium. Presenters will share how the display increased their library card and summer reading program sign-ups.

Timely Topics

Below is a small selection of sessions representing the conference's Timely Topics. For more information, visit the LibLearnX scheduler (bit.ly/LLX24-Sched).

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

● ChatGPT Is a Liar and Other Lessons Learned from Information Literacy Instructors

10:20–10:50 a.m. Saturday, January 20

Where does generative AI fit in with information literacy instruction? Presenters will share findings from a recent survey of library professionals on how they are already teaching about and using ChatGPT in the classroom. Topics include what generative AI is and is not, hallucinated information, deepfakes, misinformation, biased training data, documenting use of AI, privacy, copyright, and costs.

★ Unleashing AI's Potential: A Design Sprint for Library Staff

1–4 p.m. Saturday, January 20

This interactive design sprint will cover the key principles of AI, investigate its prominent issues, and discuss its societal implications through brainstorming and prototyping. Attendees will leave with an understanding of AI equity and ethics and an action plan for building AI-connected services that uphold those ideologies at their institution.

■ Teaching Student Workers to Use ChatGPT for Creating Metadata

2:45–3:05 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Learn how metadata librarians and student workers at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater are using ChatGPT to make completing metadata records easier. Attendees will leave this session understanding the strengths and weaknesses of ChatGPT in basic metadata tasks and how metadata librarians and student workers can collaborate.

▲ Navigating AI in Education through a K-12 Librarian's Lens

4–5 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Librarians can play a vital role in guiding students as they learn about and begin to use AI. This session will cover ways librarians can support educators at their schools wanting to implement AI in their instruction. Participants will explore AI tools, participate in surveys, and talk with other library workers about this emerging technology.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

▲ Lessons from the Trenches: Learn How Louisiana Libraries Are Fighting the War on Intellectual Freedom

2:30–3:30 p.m. Saturday, January 20

Library staffers across the US are fighting efforts to ban books and defund their libraries. Louisiana has become a hotbed of this activity. Learn what has worked, what hasn't, and what new tactics organized groups have started using against libraries. At the end of the session, attendees will be able to identify warning signs in their community, connect with allies, and better protect their staffers and patrons from harassment and threats of violence.

▲ Be Prepared: Program Challenges at Your Public Library

1–2 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Do you have the right policies and procedures in place to handle a challenge to a program at your library? **Sukrit Goswami**, director of Haverford Township (Pa.) Free Library and president of the Freedom to Read Foundation, and **Amanda Sand Vazquez**, director of Dubuque County (Iowa) Library District and president of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IFRT), will share their personal experiences with program challenges. They will be joined by **Betsy Gomez**, assistant director of communications and

public outreach in ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom, who will discuss how to leverage community relationships to prepare for and respond to program challenges.



Sukrit Goswami



Amanda Sand Vazquez

■ Promoting the Merritt Fund: Strategies and Resources

2:10–2:30 p.m. Sunday, January 21

This session will introduce the Merritt Fund Promotional Toolkit, a resource developed by IFRT that contains testimonials, example media posts, and more to spread the word about the Merritt Fund. The fund supports librarians who have been denied employment rights or discriminated against because of their gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, religion, age, or disability, or have been denied employment rights because of their defense of intellectual freedom.

▲ Not Too Young: Intellectual Freedom Programming for Children and Families

2:45–3:45 p.m. Sunday, January 21

How can librarians help children and families become advocates for the freedom to read? This session will cover practical program ideas, plans for promoting them, and possibilities for partnerships. Participants will also form small groups to discuss how to turn conversations about censorship into opportunities for advocacy.

SUSTAINABILITY

▲ 3D Scanning for Cultural Heritage Institutions: Practical Skills and Considerations for Library Preservation

1–2 p.m. Saturday, January 20

Digitization of cultural materials is becoming increasingly important as institutions work toward easing access to their collections and increasing the diversity of publicly available cultural materials. In this hands-on workshop, attendees will be introduced to new advances in 3D-scanning technology and participate in discussions regarding the legal and ethical considerations involved when scanning and preserving cultural heritage artifacts.

★ **All Jobs Are Climate Jobs: Why Library Workers Need to Be Climate Action Leaders**

1–4 p.m. Saturday, January 20

How have libraries dealt with the effects of recent climate events in their communities? In this session, participants will learn how to design a climate action program or service for their library, define best practices for collaborating with other institutions on local climate initiatives, and update job descriptions to include climate action work.

▲ **Going Green with Summer Reading**

11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m. Sunday, January 21

Staffers from MCPL will share their nontraditional format for a summer reading challenge that replaces plastic toy incentives with shared goals that leave a positive impact on the community. Summer reading participants learned about the animals, people, and environments they were helping while earning digital badges, experiences, and free books. Attendees will hear about the program's successes and challenges, and brainstorm how they might implement a similar format in their libraries.

▲ **Not Another Named Storm: Disaster Planning in Public Libraries**

1–2 p.m. Sunday, January 21

There is no single approach to creating a disaster plan that fits a library's needs and serves its community during a crisis. Presenters from Florida State University in Tallahassee will share their 2023 study that addresses public librarians' roles in disaster planning. Attendees will leave with an understanding of what makes up a model disaster plan and how to apply a plan in their own libraries.

Special Events

I Love My Librarian Awards

6–8 p.m. Friday, January 19

Each year, these awards recognize the impact and accomplishments of outstanding public, academic, and school librarians. Ten winners will share their inspiring stories, and a welcome reception for the conference will follow.

RUSA Book and Media Awards

9:45–10:45 a.m. Saturday, January 20

The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) annually recognizes the year's best in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, audiobook narration, and reference materials. At

ALA GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE

This year's ALA Governance Institute will run 1–5 p.m. on Friday, January 19. ALA leaders, staffers, and other experts will facilitate breakout sessions related to the topics of intellectual freedom and advocacy, fundraising, crisis communication, and governance. The institute is free with registration and open to the first 200 people who sign up. ●

GOVERNANCE MEETINGS

Saturday, January 20

3–3:45 p.m. ALA-APA Council Session

3:45–5 p.m. ALA Council Meeting I

Sunday, January 21

3–5 p.m. ALA Council Meeting II

Monday, January 22

1–5 p.m. ALA Executive Board Meeting ●

this prerecorded event, RUSA and cosponsor *Booklist* will announce the winners of the 2024 Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction.

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Observance and Sunrise Celebration

6:30–8 a.m. Sunday, January 21

This conference tradition celebrates Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy and highlights the connection between his life's work and the library world.

Youth Media Awards

8–9:30 a.m. Monday, January 22

More than 20 awards recognizing outstanding books, videos, and other materials for children and teens will be announced, including the Newbery and Caldecott medals, the Coretta Scott King Book Awards, and the Michael L. Printz, Pura Belpré, Stonewall, and Schneider Family awards. AL

All times listed are Eastern. Times and dates of sessions may be subject to change. Check the LibLearnX conference scheduler (bit.ly/LLX24-Sched) for the most up-to-date information.

BITE INTO

Baltimore

Where to dine in Charm City

by Meredith Pratt

Shrimp pasta
at Barcocina



PRICE GUIDE

Average price per person for a meal without drinks, tax, or tip.

\$ under \$18
\$\$ \$18–\$29
\$\$\$ \$30 and up

Hi, hon! Welcome to Bawlmer. Established as a port and shipbuilding town in 1729, Charm City has long been home to a diverse bunch of hardworking residents. Maybe that's why we have more than 200 distinct neighborhoods here, each with its own personality and flair.

For visitors to our town, this means an authentic, eclectic, and delightful experience no matter where they choose to dine. Yes, crab is still king, but there's so much more—Haitian, Cuban, Italian, Japanese, and plenty of good old Southern comfort (we're south of the Mason–Dixon line, after all).

Don't know where to start? Check out this list of favorite spots a walk, rideshare, cab, or water taxi ride away from the Baltimore Convention Center and downtown hotels. Many were also featured in Frommer's most recent list of Best Restaurants in Baltimore (bit.ly/Frommers-Balt). Dig in!

into a Maryland landmark with four locations, including this one at Inner Harbor. Its Southern-inspired menu—with chicken and waffles, shrimp and grits, crab hash and fried green tomato eggs Benedict, pimento cheese biscuits, and the Gravy Train Southern Skillet—keeps diners coming back. It's impressively inclusive, with vegan, vegetarian, nut-free, and gluten-free options. There's even a menu in braille. Reservations are not accepted; the wait for a table can be up to two hours on weekends. **Brunch, B, L daily \$–\$\$**

NEAR THE CONVENTION CENTER (DOWNTOWN)

B&O American Brasserie

2 N. Charles St.
443-692-6172
bandorestaurant.com

Baltimore's railroad past (see p. 64) is on full display in this classic eatery, tucked into the historic former Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad Company Headquarters Building, now a Kimpton Hotel. The building's original features are intact and showcase such nostalgic touches as chairs and tables from original B&O dining cars. The menu, though, is pure 21st century, offering everything from fresh farmers' market produce and seafood to cutting-edge cocktails. **Brunch (Sat, Sun), B, L (M–F), D daily \$\$**

Kona Grill

1 E. Pratt St. Bldg. #103
410-244-8994
konagrill.com

Looking for a little bit of everything? This national chain is here for you. Miso soup and jalapeño yellowtail sashimi share the menu with a steakhouse burger and a fried chicken sandwich. Try the avocado egg rolls and the baby back ribs, which are prepared with a five-spice rub and come with a side of Asian

slaw. Find salads, pasta, meat dishes, and seafood entrées, too. Don't miss the delicious desserts; the warm butter cake with raspberry sauce is a winner. **Brunch (Sat, Sun), L, D daily \$–\$\$**

Miss Shirley's Café

750 E. Pratt St.
410-528-5373
missshirleys.com

What began as a small, 42-seat café in the Roland Park neighborhood has grown

Pratt Street Ale House

206 W. Pratt St.
410-244-8900
prattstreetalehouse.com

Conveniently situated on the main downtown thoroughfare, this taproom is a mainstay for visitors and locals who work close to the Inner Harbor. Fish and chips, crispy Brussels sprouts, wings, and other traditional ale house bites abound,



Chicken 'n cheddar green onion waffles at Miss Shirley's Café

along with Baltimore favorites like crab pretzels, crab mac and cheese, and chicken Chesapeake—a lump crab cake baked atop a chicken breast. The beer list is excellent, with several offerings from local Oliver Brewing Company. **L, D daily \$**

HARBOR EAST

Azumi

725 Aliceanna St.
443-220-0477
azumirestaurant.com

This stylish sit-down restaurant, which serves authentic Japanese cuisine in the Four Seasons Hotel on the waterfront, has one of the largest selections of sushi and sake in the region. In its Flame

Room, hibachi chefs fire up meat, seafood, vegetables, and rice right in front of you. A live DJ spins in Azumi's bar and lounge on Friday and Saturday nights. **L, D (M-Sat), D (Sun) \$\$-\$\$\$**

Charleston

1000 Lancaster St.
410-332-7373
charlestonrestaurant.com

For a splurge, both calorically and monetarily, Charleston is a great option. Chef Cindy Wolf offers a prix-fixe menu with your choice of three to six courses served in a tasting order. The menu changes frequently based on what's in season, but it may include anything from grilled octopus with hickory smoked bacon purée to a sea scallop BLT to a Southern cassoulet.

Co-owner Tony Foreman masterminded the wine list, which includes more than 600 labels. **D daily \$\$\$**

Cinghiale

822 Lancaster St.
410-547-8282
cgeno.com

If you are serious about food, restaurateurs Cindy Wolf and Tony Foreman (see above) are the people to know, and their Cinghiale (pronounced ching-gyah-lay), a chic Italian spot, is the place to go. The casual, wine bar side of the restaurant—the Enoteca—has a 40-foot marble bar and offers a menu of Italian charcuterie, vegetables, and cheeses. The Osteria is Cinghiale's formal side, with an impressively imaginative menu of antipasti, pastas

(available in whole and half portions), meat, and fish.

D (M-Sat) \$\$-\$\$\$

The Oceanaire

801 Aliceanna St.
443-872-0000
theoceanaire.com

Part of a national chain, Oceanaire is a solid staple for fresh seafood in a casual and often bustling environment. Families, couples, and businessfolk flock here for grilled oysters, Maryland softshell crab, and a solid list of prime cuts of steak.

D daily \$\$-\$\$\$

LITTLE ITALY

Chiapparelli's Restaurant

237 S. High St.
410-983-3023
chiapparellisrestaurant.com

In the mood for a pizza or pasta lunch? This Little Italy gem, in business since 1940, is the best deal in town. Try the Godfather pizza for only \$15 or Grandma's ravioli for \$12. The restaurant is open for dinner, too, with a full menu of pastas, salads, calzones, lasagna, and sandwiches.

L (Tue-Sun), D daily \$-\$\$

Sabatino's

901 Fawn St.
410-727-2667
sabatinos.com

Since opening in 1955, Sabatino's has been a mainstay for traditional Italian dishes. You will feel like you're at a friend's home in the old country in this tiny rowhouse in



Baked rigatoni at Sabatino's

Photo: Sabatino's

Baltimore's historic Little Italy. Old-school waiters take care of you, offering such authentic Italian fare as eggplant parmesan, shrimp fra diavolo, calamari, and clams casino. Portions are generous. Don't skip dessert! L, D daily \$-\$\$

Vaccaro's

222 Albemarle St.
410-685-4905
vaccarospastry.com

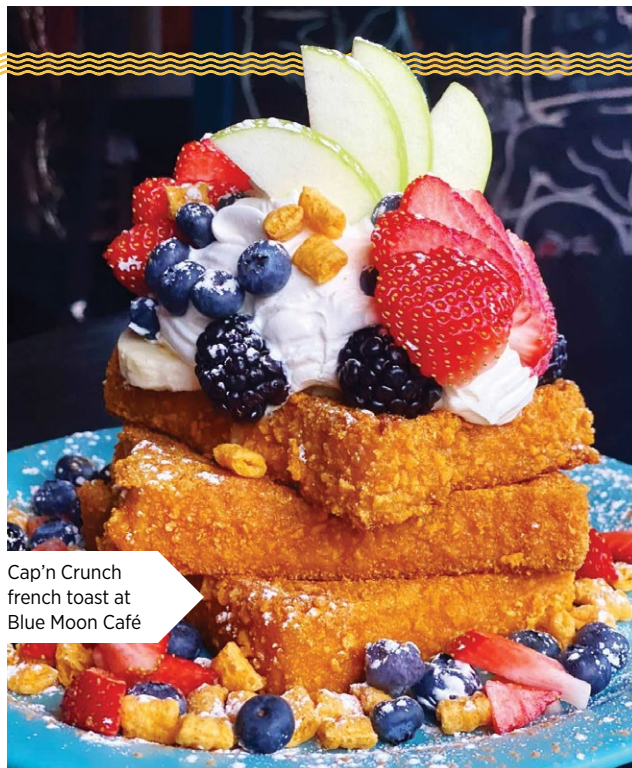
Holy cannoli! Walking into this traditional Italian pastry shop and café and smelling the sweet cannolis, cream puffs, eclairs, Napoleon puff pastries, cookies, gelato, and espresso is pure heaven. It will be tempting to linger as you gaze longingly into the cases that line the walls of this pasticceria, which opened in 1956, but the Vaccaros want you to decide fast. Besides, the quicker you choose, the quicker you can enjoy. Bene! B, L, D daily \$

CANTON

Blue Hill Tavern

938 S. Conkling St.
443-388-9363
bluehilltavern.com

Serving tasty American comfort food with some global influences, this trendy neighborhood tavern offers everything from brick-oven pizza to Chateaubriand for two, as well as—why not?—surf and turf. The menu includes a signature Tavern burger with crisp-fried onion straws, fried



Cap'n Crunch french toast at Blue Moon Café

cauliflower, seafood risotto, and Peruvian half-chicken, as well as specialty cocktails. Make sure to check out the sleek second-floor bar and spacious veranda. L (Tue-F), D (Tue-Sat) \$\$

The Chasseur

3328 Foster Ave.
410-327-6984
chasseurbaltimore.com

Downtown professionals love this nautically inspired spot for its rooftop views, happy hour, and weekend brunch. Menu highlights include duck fat-fried tater tots, a spicy chicken sammy, and crab soup. Brunch (Sat, Sun), L (F), D daily \$-\$\$

Gunther & Co.

3650 Toone St.
443-869-6874
eatatgunther.com

Married team Nancy and Jerry Trice opened this vast American restaurant in the centuries-old Gunther Boiler Building in 2016. As you walk into the two-level dining

room, take in the soaring ceiling, exposed steel beams, old beer bottles, and vintage conveyor belt that evoke the building's brewery beginnings. The menu is "globally influenced, locally spun," so you might see anything from a bone-in pork chop with yucca bravas and mojo verde to seared scallops with creamy coconut congee and saffron. The oyster bar is open for shucking Tuesday through Saturday and also for weekend brunch. On Sundays, don't miss the double-dredged, crisp-fried chicken and house-made mumbo sauce. Brunch (Sat, Sun), L (Th, F), D (Tue-Sun) \$\$-\$\$\$

Of Love and Regret

1028 S. Conkling St.
410-327-0760
olarbmore.com

Beer lovers, take note. Owned and operated by local Baltimoreans and lifelong friends, this American gastropub takes its motto—"It's

all craft"—seriously. The tap list, which leans heavily on Stillwater artisanal ales, draws a loyal local crowd to its dark and cozy environs, especially at happy hour, which starts at 4 p.m. But its menu offers a good selection of sandwiches, burgers, and full dinner entrées, too. Check the online calendar—some weekends feature a drag brunch. Brunch (Sat, Sun), D (Tue-Sun) \$

FELLS POINT

Barcocina

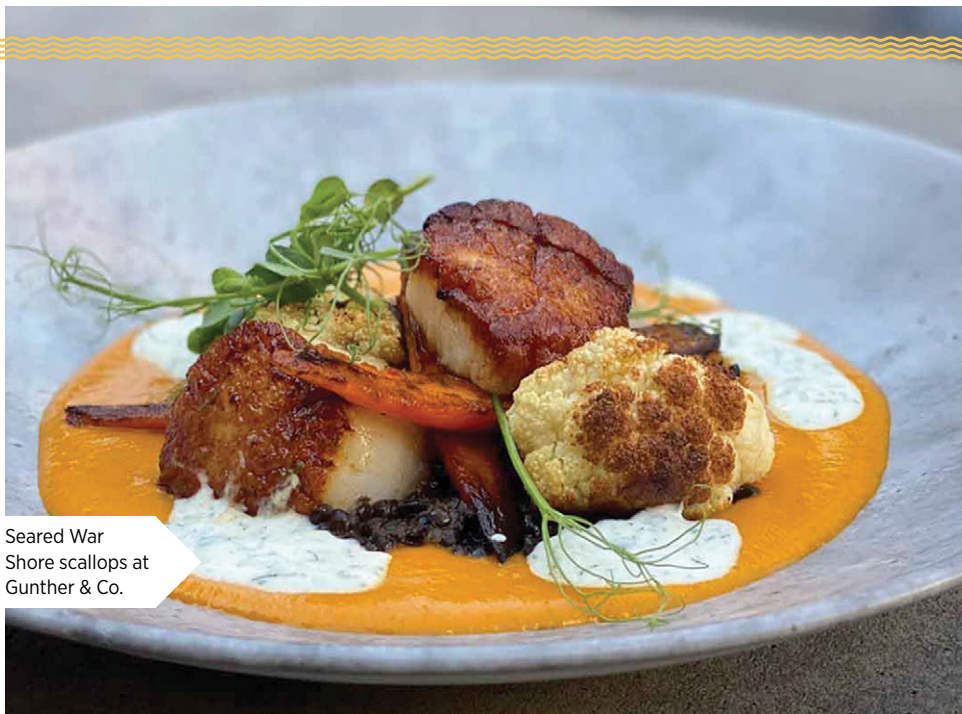
1629 Thames St.
410-563-1500
barcocina.com

For one-stop dining and late-night dancing, head to this Mexican-inspired hotspot with great waterfront views. Barcocina's menu includes fresh, well-prepared guacamoles, salsas, quesos, and salads. More than 10 varieties of tacos dot the menu along with shareable appetizers like tuna tartare tostadas and cheesesteak empanadas. Vegetarian and vegan options are also available. Brunch (Sat, Sun), L, D daily \$-\$\$

Blue Moon Café

1621 Aliceanna St.
410-522-3940
bluemoonbaltimore.com

Morning people (and, on weekends, all-nighters) need look no further than Blue Moon, which offers breakfast "with a rock 'n roll attitude." Its famous Cap'n Crunch



Seared War Shore scallops at Gunther & Co.

french toast is reason enough to visit, but the pancakes, omelets, and Benedicts also shine. **B, L daily, open 24 hours on weekends \$**

Kippo Ramen

606 S. Broadway
667-212-4841
kipporamen.com

Good ramen can be a work of art, and Kippo gets it right. Owner Shigehiko “Jacky” Okiebisu opened the restaurant because he missed real ramen from his native Japan. Expect authentic flavors and a casual vibe in this former industrial space. Check out the Hakata tonkotsu ramen, rich miso ramen, and plenty of vegetarian and vegan options. Kippo also offers sushi rolls, sashimi, gyoza, and other non-ramen Japanese bites. **L, D (Tue–Sun) \$**

Peter’s Inn

504 S. Ann St.
410-675-7313
petersinn.com

A former biker bar, Peter’s Inn used to attract a highly

eccentric crowd—filmmaker John Waters once called it his favorite restaurant in Baltimore. Today, it has a different but still quirky vibe. Owned by married couple Karin and Bud Tiffany since 1995, it offers comfort food with a fine dining flair, white tablecloths, and martini cocktails served on a silver platter. A handwritten menu with the day’s offerings may include anything from a New York strip steak slathered in butter to an endive salad, lobster pot pie, or tuna tartare. **D (Th–Sat) \$\$\$–\$\$\$\$**

Rec Pier Chop House

1715 Thames St.
443-552-1300
recpierchophouse.com

New York restaurateur and Michelin-starred chef Andrew Carmellini quickly became a favorite of die-hard Baltimoreans when he took the helm of this stunning Italian rosticceria in the Sagamore Pendry hotel. Prime steaks and chops are supreme here, but so are the sustainable

seafood and pasta dishes. Walk out on the pier after a meal for a perfect view of the Inner Harbor and iconic Domino Sugar factory sign. **Brunch (F–Sun), L (M–Th), B, D daily \$\$–\$\$\$\$**

FEDERAL HILL

Blue Agave Mexican Food

1032 Light St.
410-576-3938
blueagaverestaurant.com

Mexico’s vibrant flavors and a festive atmosphere draw locals to this hotspot. Enjoy enchiladas, fajitas, burritos, and tacos every which way, including fillings of rockfish, shrimp, chicken, or pork. Salsas and moles are made in-house daily. Blue Agave is also a tequila bar with more than 130 offerings available. Try the Paloma cocktail, with fresh lime juice, agave nectar, and grapefruit soda, or the prickly pear margarita with salt, the perfect blend of sour

and sweet. **Brunch (Sat, Sun), D daily \$–\$\$**

Cross Street Market

1065 S. Charles St.
crossstmarket.com

This historic area with 19th-century roots has seen many changes over the years, including, most recently, a major redevelopment of the 1952 Cross Street Market building in 2019. Now home to a food hall with about 20 different vendors, it is convenient, quick, and offers something for everyone—breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Four standouts to consider: Steve’s Lunch, which has been serving breakfast and lunch for more than 50 years; Sobeachy, Baltimore’s first Haitian restaurant; Theo’s Rolls & Bowls, with modern takes on traditional Vietnamese banh mi; and Atlas Fish Market, where you’ll find Maryland crab, Scottish salmon, Chesapeake Bay rockfish, Portuguese octopus, Gulf shrimp, and local oysters. **B, L, D daily \$–\$\$**

Mother’s Federal Hill Grille

1113 S Charles St.
410-244-8686
mothersgrille.com

If watching the big game while playing Skee-Ball or pool is your ideal outing, this neighborhood tavern is for you. Specializing in Maryland seafood, this Mother’s (one of three, locally) says more than 95% of its offerings are

SEAFOOD ON THE SIDE

made from scratch, including the ice cream. Meat lovers won't want to miss the famous Heart Attack on a Plate, half a pound of beef stuffed with cheddar cheese, then battered and deep fried. More than 100 beers, including 20 on tap, please choosy drinkers.

Brunch (Sat, Sun), L, D daily
\$-\$\$

The Outpost American Tavern

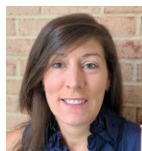
1032 Riverside Ave.
443-388-9113

theoutpostbaltimore.com

Grab a seat in this homey neighborhood bar and restaurant—your taste buds will thank you. This corner pub looks like an antique general store from the outside but like the bar from *Cheers* on the inside, with dark woodwork, red walls, a long wooden bar, and booths. Appealing choices on the seasonal menu may include anything from grilled pork belly bao buns to seared bison strip steak over cauliflower mash.

Cocktails are playful: Try the Not So Arnold Palmer, the Lindsay Lohan, or the Pines of Rum, with pineapple juice and a spritz of absinthe.

Brunch (Sat, Sun), D daily
\$-\$\$ **AL**



Baltimore native **MEREDITH PRATT** is a travel writer and author

of *Frommer's EasyGuide to Washington, D.C.* (2020).

Photo: The Choptank

A visit to Baltimore means seafood. Think colossal crab cakes, steamed crabs ready to be cracked and devoured, fresh oysters, garlicky mussels, locally caught rockfish, and buttery clams. Crab season is May to September, but you'll find excellent seafood year-round, all over town. Here are a few noteworthy spots:

The Choptank 1641 Aliceanna St.; 443-707-3364; thechoptankrestaurant.com. In 2019, this upscale fish and crab house moved into the newly restored south shed of the 200-plus-year-old Broadway Market in Fells Point—which had fallen on hard times in recent years, but now buzzes again. Steamed hard-shell blue crabs are available here, along with such other Maryland favorites as Chesapeake rockfish, crab cake sandwiches, Eastern Shore fried chicken, and boardwalk fries. Enjoy live music on the indoor stage while watching the neighborhood bustle outside the giant windows. **Brunch (Sat, Sun), L, D daily** \$-\$\$

Mama's on the Half Shell 2901 O'Donnell St.; 410-276-3160; mamasonthehalfshell.com. Mama's takes its oysters seriously. In addition to a full raw bar and a rotating selection of fresh catches, lucky diners will also find oysters Rockefeller, grilled oysters, fried oysters, oyster stew, and a combo steamer pot with, you guessed it, oysters. If oysters aren't your thing, indulge in the coddies (salt cod and potato cakes), clams casino, crab soup, seafood chowder, seafood bouillabaisse, crab cakes, or Maryland rockfish. Wash it all down with one of the state's famous Orange Crush cocktails. **Brunch (Sat, Sun), L, D daily** \$-\$\$\$

Locust Point Steamers 1100 E. Fort Ave.; 410-576-9294; locustpointsteamers.com. Outside of the busiest months for local crab, many crab houses close, but LP Steamers continues to offer hot steamed crabs and other seafood favorites. Never held a crab mallet before? The staff here will happily teach newbies the best crab-picking techniques. A steamed and raw bar is also there for the sampling. Don't miss this rowhouse restaurant's impressive views of Inner Harbor. **L, D daily** \$-\$\$\$

Thames Street Oyster House 1728 Thames St.; 443-449-7726; thamesstreetoysterhouse.com. A local institution on the historic waterfront, Thames Street Oyster House is consistently voted one of the best restaurants in town for seafood. Enjoy oysters, octopus, mussels, lobster, and more. The a la carte raw bar usually has at least 10 different kinds of oysters, brought in daily from the East and West Coasts and beyond. **L (F-Sun), D daily** \$\$-\$\$\$ ●



Steamed mussels at The Choptank

A New Ethic of Accountability

Effective DEI strategies cannot work in isolation

BY Nimisha Bhat and Pamela Espinosa de los Monteros



NIMISHA BHAT is assistant librarian at University of Cincinnati Libraries and liaison to its History, Anthropology, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality departments.



PAMELA ESPINOSA DE LOS MONTEROS is associate professor and Latin American, Iberian, and Latino/a Studies librarian at Ohio State University Libraries in Columbus. She is the founder of DEI consulting firm Imagine Lucha Lab.

Many libraries struggle to become inclusive and representative organizations, despite good intentions. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices can take on a performative role, with checklist approaches that do not necessarily address gaps or lead to meaningful change. There is also a lack of clarity around designing effective DEI practices.

So what can we do? First, take inventory of your organization's DEI interventions. This can include antibias training sessions, antiracism book clubs, climate surveys, land acknowledgements, diversity residency cohorts, and revised collection policies.

Second, ask tough questions. Why has progress so far been measured in inches instead of miles? Can any of these approaches meaningfully address the revolving door of librarians who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) as they burn out, disengage, or simply leave?

Third, if you are a leader at your library, open a call for anyone to suggest a DEI-related initiative or program with someone other than you leading it. Codesigned and coexecuted DEI interventions that center people over policy are how we move forward.

Effective DEI strategies cannot work in isolation (bit.ly/LeaningOnLabor). For example, many libraries may be interested in recruiting BIPOC librarians. But first, there needs to be a plan to nurture the interests and well-being of incoming colleagues to prevent the perception that they are merely faces in a marketing campaign.

To be successful, processes and actions must be informed by a responsibility to our collective community and the formation of resonant relationships where individuals can interact in ways that evoke hope, compassion, presence, and even playfulness (bit.ly/ICI-resonance).

This idea draws from the Indigenous style of leadership exemplified by the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers, as shared by institutional organizer Raquel D. Gutiérrez (bit.ly/ind-SJM). From this worldview, leadership is about embracing distinct perspectives that get us closer to seeing things through a whole system view.

Organizational development researchers like Leanne Cutcher and Karen Dale note that Indigenous organizational principles of consensual decision making, collective ownership, and mutual obligation via reciprocated contribution to one's community allow us to move away from a top-down power structure and toward knowledge sharing and relationality. In turn, this helps us understand the multiplicity of relationships we have with one another and with the natural world (bit.ly/Cutcher-Dale).

By following and honoring Indigenous knowledge, libraries as organizations can move toward DEI work that sustains everyone's well-being and inclusion. This approach could generate the dialogue, massive collaboration, and collective response the world needs to address major threats such as climate change, unethical use of artificial intelligence and other technologies, and global conflict.

Many organizational DEI interventions default to the tools of bureaucratic business capital. So-called success is often measured using standards focused on quantification and output. Instead, we must move away from audit culture and invest in our collective community to reimagine the possibilities of a new ethic of accountability attuned to support human flourishing.

Sustainable DEI interventions can only come once the relationships between and among individuals are nurtured and

developed. Spaces of genuine openness and belonging—of psychological and physical safety—will allow us to engage in critical conversations and leverage the collective differences and contributions that each person brings to the table. And it can be done all while holding people accountable

to advance interdependence.

We need to redefine how we assess for measurable outcomes, knowing that this work will never be done. But for it to have longevity and be sustainable, we must prioritize removing barriers for others. **AL**

Sustainable DEI interventions can only come once relationships among individuals are nurtured and developed.

Purpose and Productivity

How leaders can empower their team through reskilling

BY Cathryn M. Copper



CATHRYN M. COPPER is head librarian at Eberhard Zeidler Library at University of Toronto in Ontario.

In many libraries and organizations, it is leadership that shapes employees' expectations and their growth opportunities. As a new year begins, let's evaluate how those who manage teams can foster a better workplace by providing ways for workers to reskill, or develop new skills outside their current expertise.

First, leaders should create a clear sense of purpose for their teams. For example, if you have decided that you'd like to increase risk-taking and experimentation in your organization, that should filter down through everything you do. You must realize the impact you can have on an organization and remember that your actions motivate and inspire others. Communicating expectations and modeling positive behaviors is the most effective way to bring about change.

When employees enjoy and are passionate about their work, they are more engaged and productive. Take the time to understand your employees' strengths and skill sets and what type of work each team member favors. This can help leaders make informed decisions about how staffers can contribute to ensure the best outcomes for projects of all kinds. For example, if a staffer gets excited about planning and executing a vision, leverage that enthusiasm and ask them to lead a design thinking exercise during the ideation phase. Another staffer may enjoy analyzing user needs, a skill set that is indispensable during the evaluation phase. If you are unsure of your team members' interests, ask them during meetings or have them complete a survey.

To reskill, it is necessary to create opportunities where people can practice skills or learn new ones. Consider organizing training with your team. This is a chance to engage in new processes, methodologies, and technologies that are essential to experimentation.

Institutional or professional cross-training programs can have a considerable impact on undoing existing silos and sparking new ideas across departments. If your organization does not have a formal cross-training program, reach out to colleagues whose work you are interested in and learn more about what they do. You can glean a lot from talking with colleagues in other departments or disciplines, and all of you may decide to start an informal cross-training initiative. There is no substitute for the chance to directly observe colleagues or engage with them on new skills and ideas.

Another way for employees to develop new skills is through mentoring, which can help them achieve career goals and build confidence. If your organization does not have a mentoring program, consider

implementing one. Ones that pair newcomers with experienced senior staffers could have lasting benefits beyond reskilling.

It's also important for teams to have the ability to review a project. As librarians, most of us are trained in collecting and analyzing user experience data. Tap into this expertise on your team to improve your knowledge of evaluation techniques. Build the capacity to include user feedback as a required task for your team, which can help prioritize assessment.

If you are a leader who is empowered to make change, include benchmarks and outcomes related to reskilling in your strategic plans. Setting

the tone in these documents can be transformative, especially when such goals align with the mission, vision, and values supporting organizational change and innovation.

Recognizing the skills on your team and where mem-

bers need development is a hallmark of being an effective leader. To cultivate a more productive work environment, be sure to encourage everyone's ideas and acknowledge everyone's accomplishments. When you spot talent, nurture it—and give those under your leadership the freedom to do what they do best.

Adapted from The Experimental Library by Cathryn M. Copper (ALA Editions, 2023). **AL**

When employees enjoy and are passionate about their work, they are more engaged and productive.

Committing to Equity

Reaching marginalized youth requires an authentic approach

by Linda W. Braun



LINDA W. BRAUN is a California-based consultant and a past president of ALA's Young Adult Library Services Association.

When advertising events in multiple languages or hosting programs that highlight different cultures, library workers may think they are doing all that's necessary to engage with marginalized communities. But committing to equity requires more than checking off these types of boxes.

To achieve equity in youth services, we must build an authentic foundation that centers historically marginalized youth and families. This process is worth a closer look so that we can think more critically about the programs and services we offer.

Let's consider an example: A library in a community with a large Vietnamese population distributes fliers in Vietnamese that list a variety of afterschool activities. That action may seem equity-based, yet we need to evaluate if putting out a flier in a different language is enough for an intended audience.

For instance, will the activities—though advertised in Vietnamese—be conducted entirely in English, without a translator present? Do they focus on themes that Vietnamese families are interested in? Will they take place at times when families are available? What if coming to the library is difficult because of transportation logistics or work schedules? Are we assuming a program that resonates with one population will work for others?

When we ask these types of questions, we begin to see that marketing services or collecting materials in one's native language is only the beginning.

Consider another scenario: Youth services staffers know that there is a large Mexican population living in their area. These community members are not regular library users, and staffers would like to change that. Employees begin planning a mariachi event for Mexican families, until one staffer points out that they can't assume a mariachi band will be of interest to this group.

Staffers then agree to learn about the lived experiences, assets, and challenges of the Mexican families in their community. They connect with local Mexican organizations and ask families questions like: How do your children like to spend their spare time? What do you wish were available to your children that currently isn't? What programs and services would be beneficial to you?

After careful listening, library staffers realize the mariachi event is not something that will resonate with their target audience. They instead let their conversations dictate what, when, and where programs will be offered. Crucially, they remove themselves as the experts and share power with those in the community.

How should libraries go about designing processes that center equity authentically? They must:

Build relationships and trust.

Having informal and formal conversations with caregivers and partner organizations allow staffers to understand the specific strengths, challenges, and interests of a community.

Create programs together.

With relationships and trust in place, it's possible to plan events and services alongside families. Staffers should give community members the chance to share ideas and make decisions.

Plan around schedules.

Staffers should ask families when they are available and schedule programs at times that work best for many of them.

Select the best location. Staffers should hold programs where it's easiest for people to participate. For instance, a library

may decide to host a program at a community center that families can easily get to.

Authentic equity means abandoning a one-size-fits-all approach. It's about going beyond the surface-level view that multilingual fliers or cultural events are our go-to solutions, and instead recognizing specific assets, needs, and experiences of historically marginalized youth and their families. If you ask the right questions and prioritize your community when planning programs and services, it's possible to create a foundation of equity in everything you do. **AL**

Remove yourself as the expert and share power with those in the community.

Fighting Posttenure Fatigue

Reclaiming time and redefining leadership

BY Nia Lam and Michelle McKinney



NIA LAM is research and instruction/media studies librarian at University of Washington Bothell and Cascadia College Library.



MICHELLE MCKINNEY is reference and web services librarian at University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College.

Achieving promotion or tenure is an accomplishment worth celebrating, usually followed with a sigh of relief. However, in the days, months, and years afterward, tenured academic librarians may start to feel a lack of motivation, support, and career guidance.

Mentoring programs customarily focus on early-career librarians, and many people begin to wonder, “What next?” To answer that question, we’ve highlighted strategies for dealing with posttenure burnout.

Be intentional about your time. Day-to-day responsibilities and leadership expectations tend to increase the longer one stays in a position. Therefore, mid-career librarians need to learn when and how to say no to some opportunities and yes to others.

For a low-stakes request, try something simple like, “Unfortunately, I am unable to take that on right now.” Regularly reevaluate commitments to identify which can be discontinued instead of automatically renewed.

One of the best ways to be intentional about time is to do an audit of your workdays. Keep track of how you spend your time over the course of a week. Analyze your time by grouping similar activities into categories. Ask yourself what went well and changes you could make. Brainstorm how you would like to spend your time and identify activities to combat burnout.

Recognize leadership opportunities. Many internal leadership opportunities come in the form of committee work. As you collaborate with more people throughout your career, colleagues and mentors may begin to recommend you for projects based on your input and interests. These small-scale roles allow you to explore and define your leadership style, contemplate career goals, and determine the level of leadership you want to pursue. When deciding to lead, some factors to consider include the impact on work-life balance, the effect of shifting away from typical duties, and whether colleagues’ biases toward your gender or race could affect your ability to lead effectively.

Many librarian leadership trainings focus on earning positions with supervisory and management responsibilities. However, by the mid-career stage, you may consider other options because of limited opportunities for promotion, lack of interest in supervising, or restrictions that hinder advancement, like the inability to relocate. Examples of *lateral leadership*, the idea that a person can collaborate and help lead successful projects without authority over fellow colleagues, include chairing a committee, serving as the point person for a project subgroup, or working in a group that is leading a major project.

Embrace community. As librarians of color, we acknowledge that BIPOC library workers are often asked to serve on committees and

initiatives related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Organizations that assume people from marginalized groups will lead these efforts place undue burdens on them, risk tokenization, and underestimate the invisible and emotional labor required to do this work, especially while surrounded by white colleagues.

We have chosen to invest our time in the BIPOC library community through professional and affinity groups. This has been a healthy outlet and fulfills us in a way that serving on institutional DEI committees does not. Making connections with others in this community, especially early-career BIPOC librarians, reinvigorated both of us and helped prevent burnout. We encourage all mid-career librarians to identify and invest in a community or cause that is important to them. If a group or space does not

exist, consider creating one.

We used the mid-career point to reflect on priorities and commitments, grow leadership skills, and build community for BIPOC colleagues. By taking time to understand ourselves and our

work, it became easier to identify and choose leadership opportunities that aligned with our goals and values.

Adapted from Thriving as a Mid-Career Librarian: Identity, Advocacy, and Pathways, edited by Brandon K. West and Elizabeth Galoozis (ACRL, 2023). AL

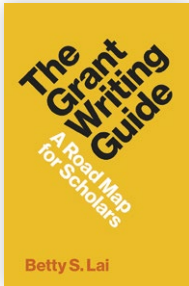
Mentoring programs customarily focus on early-career librarians, and many people begin to wonder, “What next?”

Finding Funding

Titles to navigate grant writing



REANNA ESMAIL is lead librarian for instruction at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.



The Grant Writing Guide: A Road Map for Scholars

By Betty S. Lai

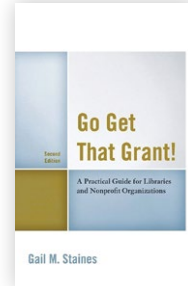
This is one of those books that accomplishes everything it promises. Divided into manageable tasks, the chapters provide practical advice, sample templates, and guided exercises to help applicants articulate their projects. Lai demystifies the grant writing process while thoughtfully reflecting on its barriers and inequalities, providing reassurances about feelings of impostor syndrome and other forms of deficit thinking. Princeton University Press, 2023. 240 p. \$22.95. PBK. 978-0-6912-3188-4.



Design for Belonging: How to Build Inclusion and Collaboration in Your Communities

By Susie Wise

Rather than provide a deep dive into the process of grant writing, *Design for Belonging* considers the role belonging plays in building sustainable collaborations. Wise defines this as the need for individuals to feel accepted and welcomed to foster meaningful participation. Drawing on strategies from noted scholars, artists, and activists like bell hooks, Boots Riley, and Victor Cary, her illustrated guide presents inclusive approaches to a wide range of topics, from sending event invitations to improving community participation. This is a valuable read for anyone interested in programming, outreach, and public services. For grant writers in particular, its strategies for creating a belonging mindset are invaluable for equitable project design. Ten Speed Press, 2022. 160 p. \$15.99. PBK. 978-1-9848-5803-0. (Also available as an ebook.)

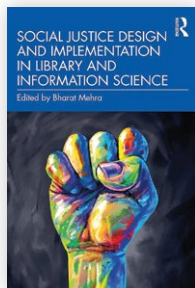


Go Get That Grant! A Practical Guide for Libraries and Nonprofit Organizations, 2nd edition

By Gail M. Staines

While the main audience for Lai's *Grant Writing Guide* is academic researchers, *Go Get That Grant!* is geared specifically toward library workers and provides practical, timeless advice relevant to a wide range of library and nonprofit contexts. A master at breaking down grant budgets—which can require a great deal of math (and headaches)—Staines walks readers through the calculations, proving that building a budget can be relatively painless. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, 132 p. \$59. PBK. 978-1-4422-7027-5.

by Reanna Esmail



Social Justice Design and Implementation in Library and Information Science

Edited by Bharat Mehra

One often overlooked strategy for grant writing is learning from models. Mehra's volume outlines recent projects and initiatives, many of which are deeply informed by commitments to equity and diversity. Organized into five parts that explore emergent topics, sample cases, research strategies, library and information curriculum, and implementation processes, the chapters provide inspiration and techniques for designing socially just projects. Examples include incorporating social justice into library education programs, pedagogical uses of comapping, and providing Narcan training for staffers. Given the breadth of topics and projects covered in the volume, readers should be able to find a chapter that speaks to their particular interests or project types. Routledge, 2022. 332 p. \$39.16. PBK. 978-0-3676-5382-8. (Also available as an ebook.)



Going Green: Implementing Sustainable Strategies in Libraries around the World


Edited by Petra Hauke, Madeleine Charney, and Harri Sahavirta

Going Green offers a much-needed comparative and international perspective on sustainability at libraries. This International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions publication focuses on sustainable practices and strategies that can provide inspiration for current grant writers. Chapter topics include fighting misinformation, centering sustainability in strategic plans, and the library's role in combating climate change. While this title will be especially helpful for grant writers working on projects related to sustainability, it is worthwhile for any grant type, as sustainable and climate-conscious project design is a collective and evolving endeavor. De Gruyter, 2018. 244 p. \$114.99. 978-3-1106-0584-6. (Also available as an ebook.)



Living in Data: A Citizen's Guide to a Better Information Future

By Jer Thorp

At first glance, a guide to data ethics might seem out of place in a list of recommendations for grant writing. However, as the Library of Congress's 2017 and 2018 Innovator In Residence Jer Thorp shows, data permeates our everyday lives and can affect the lived experience of communities. If library workers' project plans require them to work with data, an understanding of data ethics is essential. This book addresses strategies for community-engaged data practices that go beyond Institutional Review Board training. Even if your grant project does not involve data collection, you should read this book to discover how to move from being the object of passive data extraction to the subject of active citizenship. Macmillan, 2021. 320 p. \$18. PBK. 978-1-2508-4915-1. (Also available as an ebook.) 

PEOPLE

Announcements

ON THE MOVE

Peter Bae became library director at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, in August.

The Association of Research Libraries in Washington, D.C., appointed **Todd Breach** senior director of finance and administration, effective October 30.

July 5 **Andrea Brown** started as library director at Warner University in Lake Wales, Florida.

Elizabeth Dill became dean of the university library at California State University, Long Beach, August 1.

Sarah Douglas-Murray became CEO of Milton (Ontario) Public Library November 6.

November 1 **Erin Dreiling** was named executive director of Atlanta-Fulton (Ga.) Public Library Foundation.

October 11 **Andrea Jackson Gavin** became inaugural program director of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Digital Library Trust, a partnership of the HBCU Library Alliance in McDonough, Georgia, and Harvard Library in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



In August **Aparna Ghosh** was named assistant professor and technical services and collections librarian at Eckerd College Library in St. Petersburg, Florida.



Jennifer Giltrop started as executive director of Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries in Vancouver, Washington, December 4.

Erla P. Heyns became university librarian and vice provost at University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries January 1.

Kudos

In August the Special Libraries Association (SLA) awarded its 2023 John Cotton Dana Award, recognizing lifetime achievement and exceptional service to SLA and the library and information profession, to **Tom Rink**, an instructor for library services at the Broken Arrow campus of Northeastern State University in Oklahoma. ●

June 22 **Angie Drobnic Holan** was named director of the International Fact-Checking Network at the Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida.

University of Southern California in Los Angeles appointed **Melissa Just** dean of libraries effective November 27.

June 16 **Katherine Loeser** became manager of Los Angeles County Library's Claremont Helen Renwick branch.

Aubrey Madler became executive director of Porter Henderson Library at Angelo State University in San Angelo, Texas, in June.

September 5 **Tania Munz** started as president and CEO of the Forest History Society in Durham, North Carolina.

Loren Polk became director of Stowe (Vt.) Free Library June 19.

Neil Romanosky was named dean of Michigan State University Libraries in East Lansing effective September 11.

Astrida Orle Tantillo became president and librarian of Newberry Library in Chicago December 1.

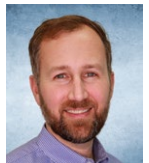
In May **Curtice Taylor** joined Genesee District Library's William F. Delaney

Headquarters Library in Flint, Michigan, as branch librarian.

Michael Steinmacher became director of library services for Ogle Learning Commons Library at Ivy Tech Community College in Sellersburg, Indiana, in August.

PROMOTIONS

Dan Bostrom became director of marketing and communications at Reaching Across Illinois Library System in Burr Ridge October 31.



Paul Boyce was promoted to manager of Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library's New Albany branch October 29.

In April **Ann Flournoy** was promoted to director of Keller (Tex.) Public Library.

Miriam Nauenburg was promoted to head of metadata management and discovery services at University of West Georgia's Ingram Library in Carrollton October 1.

Stephanie Stillo was promoted to chief of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division of the Library of Congress October 9.

November 6 **Ariane White** was promoted to director of organizational culture, equity, diversity, and inclusion at UCLA Library.



RETIREMENTS

September 8 **Steven Anderson** retired as president and CEO of the Forest History Society in Durham, North Carolina.

Karen Cullings retired as executive director of Dauphin County (Pa.) Library System September 30.

In Memory

Jeanie Diaz, 43, a youth librarian at the Belmont branch of Multnomah County (Ore.) Library, died July 15. She had worked in the library system since 2015.

Susana Hinojosa, 74, a reference librarian and government documents librarian at University of California, Berkeley (UCB) for 38 years until retiring in 2009, died June 21. She was an active ALA member, serving on the Intellectual Freedom Committee and the Association of College and Research Libraries' Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee. She served as 2001–2002 president of Reforma, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking, and as a member of the California Library Association's Minority Concerns Committee. A strong union activist, Hinojosa served as president of AFT Local 1795, representing Berkeley librarians, from 1986 to 1992, and was an active member of the Librarians Association of the University of California. In 2010, she received the Arnulfo D. Trejo Librarian of the Year Award from Reforma, and in 2020, she was recognized by the 150 Years of Women at Berkeley Project, which highlights the untold stories of UCB's women leaders.

Lesley Keogh, 68, children's librarian at Wilton (Conn.) Library since 2001, died March 25. She had previously served as a children's librarian at Bethel (Conn.) Public Library from 1982 to 2001.

Hazel T. Nimmo, 98, a retired English teacher and former head librarian at Camden (N.J.) High School, died June 12. She led the school's library for more than two decades until her 1987 retirement.

Susan Patron, 75, a children's book author and longtime librarian at Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL), died October 24. Patron's novel *The Higher Power of Lucky* won the Newbery Medal in 2007. She joined LAPL as a children's librarian in 1972 and rose through the ranks before retiring in 2007 as senior children's librarian and juvenile materials collection development manager. While at LAPL, she launched STORY: Seniors Taking the Opportunity to Reach Youth, a program that recruited older adults to learn storytelling techniques. She was an active ALA member, serving on several children's book award committees, among others. She was also a member of the board of advisors for Los Angeles PBS affiliate KCET-TV's *Storytime*.

David E. Williamson, 78, who served on the Marion (Ohio) Public Library Board of Trustees for 38 years, died October 3. ●

Betsy Fowler retired as director of Williamsburg (Va.) Regional Library in December.

Jana Prock retired as director of Keller (Tex.) Public Library in March.

November 30 **Lisa Rosenblum** retired as executive director of King County (Wash.) Library System.

Ray Schwartz retired as head of library information systems at William Paterson

University in Wayne, New Jersey, in January 2023.

Will Stuiwenga retired as library development cooperative projects manager at Washington State Library in Olympia in September.

AT ALA

Adriane Alicea began as talent acquisition manager at ALA October 23.

October 2 **Thomas Ferren** was promoted to Core's deputy executive director of learning and events.

Em Gallagher was promoted to program officer for ALA's Public Programs Office (PPO) October 2.

Meghan Giesecker was promoted to program officer for PPO October 2.

May 15 **Rachel Hendrick** was promoted to editor and publisher at *Choice*.

Jean Hodges joined ALA as director of the Communications, Marketing, and Media Relations Office October 2.

October 30 **Anjali Jain** became program officer for community engagement in ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services.

James Major became manager of professional learning for the American Association of School Librarians September 18.

Kaileen McGourty was promoted to PPO program officer October 2.

Karen O'Brien retired as director of the Office for Accreditation November 30.

Julie Reese was promoted to executive director of Core in May.

Letitia Smith retired as membership marketing manager for the Young Adult Library Services Association November 1.

Marlo Thompson joined ALA as human resources assistant September 13. [AL](#)



Keeping Track

In 1827, the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad became the first common carrier railway in the US, revolutionizing commercial travel. Its creation cemented Baltimore as the “birthplace of American railroading,” says Anna Kresmer, archivist at the B&O Railroad Museum (BORM), located in the city’s historic Mount Clare Station and Roundhouse building.

“It really [was] a seismic culture shift,” Kresmer says. “We call it the moonshot. We liken it to the internet, how it had that kind of change on people.”

Kresmer analyzes and catalogs materials, supports exhibit development, and oversees BORM’s research library, home to more than 5,000 titles. Locomotives aside, BORM’s collection—including its archives, library, and small objects—measures approximately 7,200 linear feet. Most items are from the 1820s to early 1970s.

Kresmer fulfills reference requests across disciplines, from rail history buffs to authors and screenwriters seeking

to tell historically accurate stories. Standouts from the library and archives, according to Kresmer, include original journals of surveyors determining the railroad’s path; stereo slides of the 1927 Fair of the Iron Horse, B&O’s two-week-long centennial celebration; and a mechanical pencil gifted by President Abraham Lincoln to then-B&O President John Work Garrett (their friendship helped keep B&O’s services open to the Union during the Civil War).

These materials, Kresmer says, help provide broader context for societal changes in the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly with establishing a shared American identity.

“The railroad changed our concept and understanding of distance and what constituted a country,” she says. “It took us from small town or small colony identification into a nation.” **AL**

THE BOOKEND showcases librarians, their work, and their workspaces. For consideration, email americanlibraries@ala.org.



PLA 2024 Conference

April 3–5 | Columbus



Dulcé Sloan



Ta-Nehisi Coates



Mary Annaïse Heglar

The premier public library conference returns April 3–5 in vibrant Columbus, Ohio! Join us for the chance to connect with library colleagues worldwide, discover groundbreaking ideas, explore the latest in services and tech, and be inspired by visionary speakers.

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FEATURES

- 100+ education programs
- Half-day workshops
- 200+ exhibitors
- How-To Stage
- Book Buzz
- Career Center
- Big Ideas with Ta-Nehisi Coates & Mary Annaïse Heglar
- Closing Session with Dulcé Sloan!
- Author events
- Library tours
- Pop-up shops
- Networking opportunities
- PLA dog park & more!

REGISTRATION

IN-PERSON (RECEIVED BY FEB. 23, 2024)

- PLA/OLC personal members: \$394
- ALA personal members: \$488
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